DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 299 861 HE 021 739

TITLE	Proceedings of the Conferences on Excellence. Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study Conference on Excellence (Salt Fork State Park, Ohio, November 3-4, 1983) and Conference on Selective Excellence (Salt Fork State Park, Ohio, November 1-2, 1984).
INSTITUTION	Ohio Board of Regents, Columbus.
PUB DATE	87
NOTE	105p.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Conference Proceedings (021)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC05 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Administrative Policy; *Administrator Attitudes; *Administrator Role; College Administration; College Faculty; *College Planning; College Presidents; College Programs; Deans; Educational Policy; *Educational Quality; *Excellence in Education; *Higher Education
IDENTIFIERS	Ohio; Provosts

ABSTRACT

The conferences reported in this document represent two phases of a process that has resulted in an array of programs to strengthen publicly assisted higher education in the state of Ohio. The following conference papers are provided: "A State Perspective on Excellence (and What Is Excellence?)" (Paul J. Olscamp); "The Role of the Graduate Dean in Achieving Excellence" (Robert E. Powell); "The University's Assessment of Excellence--A Provost's View" (Noel L. Leathers); "The Administration of Excellence--A University's Options" (Wimberly C. Royster); "Setting Priorities (Short Term and Long Term) To Achieve Selective Excellence" (Charles J. Ping); "Setting Priorities To Achieve Selective Excellence" (Michael R. Ferrari); "The Role of the Graduate Dean in Promoting Selective Excellence in Graduate Education and Research" (Harold L. Allen); "How to Make the Best Use of Good Programs and Faculty" (Leo F. Solt); and "The Chancellor's View of Selective Excellence" (William B. Coulter). Agendas and lists of participants are also provided for each conference. (KM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED299861

Proceedings of the Conferences on Excellence

Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study

November 3–4, 1983
November 1–2, 1984
Salt Fork State Park

HE 021 739

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

OHIO BOARD OF REGENTS

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

© 1987 by the Ohio Board of Regents, 3600 State Office Tower,
30 East Broad Street, Columbus, Ohio 43215
All rights reserved

Contents

Foreword vii

Salt Fork I—RACGS Conference on Excellence

Agenda 1
Introduction 3
"A State Perspective on Excellence (and What is Excellence?)"
Paul J. Olscamp 5
"The Role of the Graduate Dean in Achieving Excellence"
Robert E. Powell 15
"The University's Assessment of Excellence—A Provost's View"
Noel L. Leathers 21
"The Administration of Excellence—A University's Options"
Wimberly C. Royster 26
Conference Participants 41

Salt Fork II—RACGS Conference on Selective Excellence

Agenda 44
Introduction 46
"Setting Priorities (Short Term and Long Term) To Achieve Selective Excellence"
Charles J. Ping 48

"Setting Priorities to Achieve Selective Excellence"
Michael R. Ferrari 54
"The Role of the Graduate Dean in Promoting Selective Excellence in Graduate Education and Research"
Harold L. Allen 64
"How to Make the Best Use of Good Programs and Faculty"
Leo F. Solt 71
"The Chancellor's View of Selective Excellence"
William B. Coulter 88
Conference Participants 96

Foreword

In November 1983, the Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (RACGS) held the first of two conferences devoted to the topic of excellence in higher education. Both conferences were held at Salt Fork State Park and have come to be known among the participants as "Salt Fork I" and "Salt Fork II." Though separated by a full year, the conferences represent two important phases of a process that has resulted in an array of programs to strengthen publicly assisted higher education in the state of Ohio.

The proceedings of these conferences are being published in the hope that the ideas presented may be useful to educators in Ohio and other states as well. The meetings demonstrate the value of the exchange of information in the planning process; they also show that out of discussion can evolve strategies for effecting significant changes in the programs offered throughout the state.

The editors of this publication deserve thanks not only for their skill but also for their perseverance. Robert E. Powell, Dean of the Graduate College at Kent State University, has brought these proceedings to print. He has had the invalu-

able assistance of Julia A. Froble, Conference Secretary, Kent State University, who kept the project on its course, and of Betsy Isaac, who coordinated this publication for the Ohio Board of Regents. Finally, John Hubbell provided the technical direction in the production of the proceedings by the Kent State University Press.

Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study
Salt Fork I
The First Conference on Excellence

November 3–4, 1983
Salt Fork State Park

Thursday, November 3, 1983

1:00P.M.–1:05P.M.	Welcome-Robert E. Powell, Dean of the Graduate College, Kent State University
1:05P.M.–3:00P.M.	A State Perspective on Excellence (and What is Excellence?)-
	Comments-Paul J. Olscamp, President, Bowling Green State University
	Moderator-Gary H. Knock, Associate Dean of the Graduate School, Miami University
3:15P.M.–5:00P.M.	The Role of the Graduate Dean in Achieving Excellence-
	Comments-Robert E. Powell, Dean of the Graduate College, Kent State University
	Moderator-Georgia E. Lesh-Laurie, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Cleveland State University

7:40P.M.–9:30P.M. The University's Assessment of Excellence—A Provost's View-
Comments-Noel L. Leathers, Senior Vice President and Provost, University of Akron
Moderator-Ronald E. Barr, Associate Provost, Ohio University

Friday, November 4, 1983

9:15A.M.–11:30A.M. The Administration of Excellence—A University's Options-
Comments-Wimberly C. Royster, Vice Chancellor of Research and Dean of the Graduate School, University of Kentucky
Moderator-Donald C. Thomas, Dean of the School of Graduate Studies, Wright State University

Introduction

Robert E. Powell

The Ohio Board of Regents was established in 1963 and was charged by the General Assembly of the state of Ohio to approve or disapprove all new degrees and new degree programs to be offered by state-assisted institutions of higher education in Ohio. As part of the process in fulfilling this general charge, the chancellor of the board has delegated to the Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (RACGS) the responsibility for assessing new graduate degree programs and making recommendations for approval or disapproval. Responsibility for the final decision rests with the chancellor and the board.

The fourteen members of RACGS include the twelve graduate deans from the state institutions which have graduate programming and two graduate deans from private institutions. The committee meets monthly to provide the assessments of graduate programming asked for by the chancellor, and to discuss academic excellence and how to identify excellence in existing graduate programs. In particular, academic quality of graduate programming is assessed by examining the scholarly and creative achievements of the faculty, the potential of the students, the curricular design of the pro-

gram, the supporting library holdings, and the physical facilities (including laboratories and equipment) that house the program.

To assess factors such as those just mentioned, the terms "quality" and "excellence" are frequently used. These are, perhaps, two of the most overused, misunderstood, nondefined terms in educational parlance. Thus, it was suggested in Spring 1983 that RACGS put aside a time to discuss the ideas of quality and excellence. The Salt Fork Conference on Excellence grew from these beginnings and resulted in a conference that involved RACGS, the Ohio Board of Regents, and the Regents' staff.

The agenda for the conference included a president, a vice-president or provost, and a graduate dean, each from Ohio, and a graduate dean not from the state. These individuals were asked to comment on a specific area. After the comments, the group then had an opportunity to ask questions, add further comments, and discuss that segment of the conference.

The four areas of discussion were:

1. "A State Perspective on Excellence (and What is Excellence?)"
2. "The Role of the Graduate Dean in Achieving Excellence"
3. "The University's Assessment of Excellence—A Provost's View"
4. "The Administration of Excellence—A University's Options"

While this collection of papers is by no means a definitive response to "quality" and "excellence," it offers the basis for further discussion, a working paper for building excellence.

A State Perspective on Excellence (and What is Excellence?)

Paul J. Olscamp

My remarks are about a basic conceptual confusion. It concerns the basis upon which states throughout this country evaluate and fund higher education on the one hand, and on the other hand, how we should judge what the word "good" means in our educational system, that is, how we determine what is good, better, best, excellent. I think that I can safely claim that nowhere in this country, with the possible exception of Tennessee, do we award money on the basis of how good an institution is. And I know of no state methods for evaluating program excellence, at least not as I understand the term. Indeed no one, if I'm right, can evaluate program excellence in an institution. What we do right now I call public accountability. I want to argue that what currently passes for evaluation at the state level is really public accountability, and that evaluation, program justification, and comparative evaluation between institutions are very different from public accountability.

In an article I wrote some time ago, I argued that public accountability for public institutions of higher education should be totally quantitative in nature. I was referring to costs that are concerned with such matters as usage of space,

cost of instruction per program, average teaching loads, student credit hour distribution, energy consumption rates, average salary, job placement rates, travel costs, number and value of grants and contracts, etc. I suggested that for most purposes public accountability means two things: 1) Proof of the cost-effective use of public resources, and 2) proof that the institution is doing what it promised to do, for example, that you teach the courses you say you will teach in the catalog.

In the case of cost effectiveness we are, of course, speaking of a comparative numerical analysis. The costs for an institution might be compared to some standard, for example, a statewide standard which would include average construction costs for a type of building, or be compared to costs generated by other institutions involving the same sort of activities as the institution being studied. As to delivery of what has been promised, we are speaking of empirical verification of fact; in other words, are we really teaching what is in the catalog and if not, why not? In most cases the definition of acceptable performance is non-normative, that is to say, it is descriptive or empirical in nature. It has nothing to do with what you ought to do or what you should be or how good you are.

But there is another matter, which some think is closely related to the first, and that is the question of what a good, i.e., high-quality professor, program, or institution is and what relationship, if any, exists among all these quantifiable institutional facts (for example, volumes in a library) and the degree of its excellence. If these attributes—"good" professor, "excellent" course, "fine" library, "first-class" institution—are all stated in quantitative or numerical terms, as some would have it, then it must be impossible for two institutions or pro-

fessors to have the same numerical descriptors and yet one of them be better than the other. To put it in another way, if the words "excellent library" simply means X number of volumes, and if libraries A and B both have X volumes, A can't be better than B. Similarly, if two professors teach the same course, have the same number of students, generate the same number of student credit hours, and have the same degrees; if the students achieve roughly the same level on tests and the instructors teach the same number of hours per week, do the same number of hours of advising, and if both satisfy such other quantitative criteria as may be associated with being an excellent professor, then professor A cannot be better than professor B. This will also be true of two students who receive the same numerical grades, i.e., two A students being equal, one could not be better than the other.

But I suggest that it is possible for the faculty to have identical workload sheets and for all other quantitative analyses of their performance to be identical, and yet one of them may be a good professor and the other not very good. I also suggest that two students can graduate with exactly the same numerical grade averages and yet one of them can be much better educated than the other and much more intelligent. I suggest that two libraries may have exactly the same number of books, but one may be very much better than the other, given of course that not all the books are the same and that services differ.

There are many devices for analyzing public accountability, that is, quantitative accountability. The important thing from my point of view when analyzing costs, not only for a given institution but for comparing different institutions, is that such analyses cannot answer questions such as How good is University X? or How good is (fill in the blank) program, de-

partment, faculty, etc. within the institution? except in the area of what I shall call (and this is an important exception) the opinion universe. The opinion universe consists of judgments based on numbers of things like Nobel prizes won by your faculty, Guggenheims, National Book Awards, etc. The opinion universe is important because there must be some reason why such faculty don't work in Ohio schools, or why relatively few of them do, and no Nobel laureates, I think. But it doesn't tell us what their reasons are for not working in Ohio schools. For example, making more money in Texas at Austin is not necessarily sufficient to make a value judgment between Ohio State and Texas at Austin.

Such surveys as the Roose-Anderson report should also be included in the opinion universe. I call this *opinion* universe because that is what I think it really is. My experience leads me to believe that what we in fact do is to make judgments about programs on the basis of where our graduate students are working, where we graduated, and who is working right now that we know. But we *act* as though we are comparing *goodness*. When we cite our prizes, or the lack of them; when we cite the number of volumes in the library, or the lack of them; when we cite the size of our budget, or the lack of funds; when we cite the percentage of our faculty who have earned the highest degree in their field, and so on and so forth, some people say, Ah, but you see, those things are closely related to excellence; cost and quality go hand-in-hand. I reply, That's not an answer. Even by saying that they are related, you admit that they are two things, not one thing. Even if cost and quality are closely related, cost is one thing, quality is another. They both exist each as a separate entity. So tell me about quality without talking about cost. If they are two things, surely you must be able to tell me some

things that are true of one but not of the other. Because if you can't, then the Law of Identity suggests that they are not two things, they are one. If there is no statement that is true of A but not true of B, then A and B are the same thing.

Tell me how to recognize the presence or absence of quality without telling me about the budget. And tell me which institutions are of high quality, but do not yet tell me about their price. Let me suggest that we leave the numbers alone and speculate about what it is that we are supposed to produce. And let's say that what we are supposed to produce at the graduate level are two things. First, we produce students with attributes and skills warranting, at least in our faculty's eyes, the conferral of an advanced degree. And secondly, we produce a worthwhile research product. Again, I'm talking about a doctoral program in a university, not about medical schools, other professional schools, or undergraduate programs. The former, that is to say the student who has attributes and skills that warrant the conferral of an advanced degree, provides a set of complex criteria for judging graduates, namely, the specific list of these attributes and qualities. Particular skills and attributes at the graduate level are different not only in degree but in some cases in kind from those we expect of successful undergraduates. One might give some examples of qualities or properties which a successful Ph.D. candidate ought to have in order to warrant the granting of the degree. These are not very scientifically put together, but they are some of the things that I look for. Some are attitudinal in nature and the others are skill oriented:

- Objectivity, even at the sacrifice of some desired personal objective (which I think implies emotional control in research);

- A realization of the high probability of failure in any given project;
- Keen analytical ability;
- Excellent descriptive capacity in narration (and obviously different kinds of linguistic capacity depending upon what the Ph.D. field is);
- Technical mastery, whether of a quantitative nature in mathematical disciplines or of the experimental method;
- Mastery of some methodology peculiar to the field in which one is working, or of artistic skills peculiar to the appropriate discipline;
- Demonstrated capacity to think independently of direction by a mentor.

Beyond a certain point we don't want the student who is a doctoral recipient to be tied to the apron strings of his or her advisor; we want the person to be leaving the nest on his or her own wings, capable of doing some independent research. He or she must have demonstrated the capacity to define theses or hypotheses on the basis of evidence or argumentation at a level equivalent to or superior to that of peers, or even of their teachers. We should see progressive mastery of increasing levels of difficulty. We don't want people to go out on their own, unable to do more difficult work than is evidenced in their Ph.D. dissertation (unless, of course, it turns out to be an extraordinarily high level piece of work to start with). For the large majority we would be looking for evidence that the dissertation was the beginning and not the end of their level of excellence. The capacity to publish in referred journals, etc., or to perform, paint, dance, what have you, before working professionals at other institutions is essential. Finally, the ability to evaluate the work of others fairly and objectively is needed.

Now for each property of the educated graduate there is a parallel list of features of a program, the curriculum, and the assets of an institution that are causally related, I believe, to the presence or absence of features of the educated graduate. Similarly, teachers must have certain properties that are also necessary for producing the quality graduate, just as libraries and laboratories have certain properties. None of these features, it seems to me, are completely describable in numerical or quantitative terms. If a library contains two million volumes, will the student become an educated graduate in terms of the properties I've just given? What if this collection has no books in philosophy, history, or language? And even if there are books in these disciplines, what if they are books of poor quality?

I suggest that the answers to those questions are fairly obvious. Disciplinary experts know if they are any good. What "good" means relative to their field and what properties produce quality are difficult to know for the layperson. A decent philosopher, for example, can recognize a good philosopher and excellent philosophical writing. If Bertrand Russell, in his entire career, had written only the single, brief article "On Denoting" instead of thirty-three books, he would still be among the great philosophical people of this century. Why? Because that article solves some basic problems about which entities would theoretically be required to explain reality. It provided a method that is still used for addressing certain different but related problems. It stimulated a debate over the structure of language, and it contributed to other fields such as cybernetics. The article's scope and insight cannot be quantified.

Libraries A and B could have the same number of books and one could be better than the other, but they couldn't be

the same books if that were the case. Obviously, A might have two million comic books and B a decent collection. But the point is that the difference between comic books and a good library collection cannot be quantitatively characterized. It is the content which, of course, is the basis of distinction. What I said about Russell's article cannot be expressed numerically, and yet these are precisely the ideas that make the difference between a brilliant mind and a pedestrian one. For each of the classes of entity I have mentioned—the students themselves, their program, the professor, the library, and countless other factors—there is a necessary set of such properties, describable in what I might call languages of quality, which cannot be rendered in quantitative terms. Hence, *program quality*—as opposed to program cost, program size, program enrollments, and student credit hour production—cannot be quantified.

So what is the importance of this, if any? It seems to me that these things follow: 1) Satisfactory accountability procedures imply nothing about the *quality* of the program in an institution. 2) Internally, arguments for program support based solely upon numerical comparisons between department budget size, size of library, etc. should be assessed on the basis of program goodness. 3) If program quality is a desirable feature of an institution, then reallocation of resources cannot be determined by quantitative criteria alone.

So what should the state accept as evidence of excellence? The topic of this discussion, as you will recall, is "What is excellence from a state viewpoint," and I changed it to what excellence *should* be. If I had to find out which were the best programs in the state and which were the best schools, I would want proof that a university's programs produce in our graduates the properties or attributes that we know to be

cumulatively definitive of the well-prepared Ph.D. I'll say that again, I would want proof that our university's programs produce in our graduates the qualities or attributes we know to be cumulatively definitive of the well-prepared Ph.D. I stress that all of the quantitative information you can gather from Ohio State or any other school does not logically imply that conclusion. I know very well it doesn't. From any set of numbers in the numerical descriptors of any of our institutions, no conclusion is conveyed about the normative evaluation of its product. We are talking about "outcome testing," and if we were really serious, we would also be talking about interinstitutional competition. Perhaps we should be verifying institutional claims that we do produce in our graduates the qualities and attributes we know to cumulatively define them as well prepared, perhaps by giving common examinations, as surgical or neurological board certification exams in medicine are given now. Perhaps philosophers from all universities should be taking things like board exams. We could have outside examiners—and when I say outside examiners I don't mean friends from the department down the hall on a Ph.D. dissertation—I mean *outside*. With rare exceptions, you don't see these board certification processes outside the professions.

I am suggesting that the state does not presently undertake any systematic evaluation of the qualitative side of our institution. Oh, we do little things like funding the occasional Regents professorships, but that doesn't help much. We, as a state, do not allocate any portion of our operating budgets on the basis of proven competitive superiority, though a proposal has been made to do that in an experimental sort of way the next time around. We have, for the first time, a committee on program excellence, but what they are doing so far

is based upon numerical analysis and opinion. Nationally, some people are pushing to have common, competitive examinations and I think that would be a step in the right direction. I suggest that the criteria to be met to prove relative excellence are nonquantitative in nature. Furthermore, they involve competition. There should be fair tests, administered to all institutions equally. On the basis of that kind of testing we can make interinstitutional judgments. Until that really happens, I don't think that we are serious about qualitative evaluation; I think we are just serious about costs.

Paul J. Olscamp is President of Bowling Green State University, Bowling Green, Ohio.

The Role of the Graduate Dean in Achieving Excellence

Robert E. Powell

A conference I attended in 1975 started out with a memorable comment: "Being a graduate dean is like fishing for muskellunge with a three pound test line. You don't catch many fish but when you do, it's a good one."

The university is in a more deliberate process of planning than ever before. We are all pursuing the idea that planning does not mean "let's figure out what happened six months ago." As we have found since this conference began, universities are being asked to be accountable—and I'm really not sure what that means. Some people say, Well, are you filling jobs within the state by what you are doing within the university? or, Do you have twenty people in each classroom instead of three? We come back to the idea of numerical data or quantitative data that Paul Olscamp has presented. To some, accountability means, Does everyone get a job when they graduate from graduate school? Everything seems to be measured on a "what's happening today" yardstick. I think this is what we must protect against while still understanding the concern.

A graduate dean does not pay a faculty—we have no purse strings. This supposed shortcoming is, I think, a tre-

mendous advantage. We can give one hundred percent of our time to the problems of encouraging whatever excellence is supposed to be. Some of our challenges include paying attention to programs and the curricular design, responding to a discipline's needs, responding to the Regents' needs, providing a faculty that can deliver the kind of curricula we desire, ensuring a suitable library and suitable equipment in support of our programs, and reviewing programs in a way that will make them better. We can suggest to our colleagues a variety of things that we think ought to be done, even though in reality they may never be achieved because, again, we do not have the fiscal control of faculty lines. We can talk about faculty scholarship and creativity, develop reasonable graduate faculty standards, support a workload analysis and structure that will encourage scholarship amongst our faculty, and support a grants administration that will encourage outside funding to allow further research. We can try to create an attitude and environment for graduate student development, ensure effective admission and retention, and provide reasonable stipends for student recruitment. We can encourage appropriate departmental involvement with students so that we foster an environment for learning and so that we have better means of advising our students and helping them maintain progress toward their degrees. These are things our colleagues do not examine or talk about in the rest of the deanery—those with faculties. I have referred to deans with faculties. The graduate dean probably has the largest faculty of all—the graduate faculty. This is the group of faculty to which the university often points with greatest pride.

I have just mentioned the everyday expectations of the graduate dean. Some call us the bulldog of standards. That is

because some of our colleague deans are willing to pass on the responsibility for excellence and let us tilt at the windmill while they do more mundane (and safe) things. Our university still expects us to be high on excellence. This was brought to my attention just two days ago when I was talking to a faculty colleague on campus. He said, "You know, what you guys do in the administration, what the president does, what the Board of Regents does, really doesn't affect us a heck of a lot on a day-to-day operation. We go in to teach our classes, we try to do our research, we meet with our students, and we go home. All this time, you are sitting there eight hours a day trying to figure out some better means to administer a program. We are really quite a bit removed from what you do."

We need to remember this observation when we are tempted to cause administrative adjustments within the university. I hope we can understand a larger role so that as we make these adjustments in whatever is going on, we allow our faculty to do what a faculty ought to do; that is, to be scholars. It seems that a university, using whatever standards and expectations that we as graduate deans have, would be wise to ask the question, What is our university about and how can we strengthen those academic endeavors which we are already doing very well? Each of us has programs under our wing that are branded, if you will, as very, very good. Some programs aren't very good. We have some that we can make better. We have programs that are good or acceptable and yet, if we had our say, that would probably be a good level to maintain them—that is, good or acceptable. We probably have some programs that may be acceptable, even less than acceptable, and, as far as we see our goal within the university, they should be de-emphasized.

All of this leads to our ability to readjust our internal methods of funding so that we make certain areas extremely good. We can encourage the very good programs through the use of, for lack of a better term, centers of excellence. For example, we emphasize liquid crystal research in the Liquid Crystal Institute at Kent State University. These centers allow better visibility—visibility both academically and outside our traditional focus—in particular, visibility by people in the central administration of the university. They often have a direct effect upon the funding (and, hence, ultimate possible success) of research areas. We must be careful not to create "centers of excellence" in name only. The internal pressures to establish centers will be great—especially if these centers receive favorable funding.

We can encourage the very good faculties and programs by directing finances toward those areas (as graduate deans, some of us have stipend monies which can be used in this effort). Another prime resource is research seed money which we can funnel into a very few carefully selected programs to help them obtain outside research funding.

This all calls on us to be good decision makers at a time when it is very difficult to make decisions. On paper, everybody would say, Yes, let's get better. However, when we get down to actually saying, You are going to get better and you are not, then it becomes extremely difficult and political.

To have these additional resources and to make programs better, we really have to decide where we are *not* going to be excellent. We are well aware of the overexpansion of the sixties and seventies. That was a very natural way to do it. We had certain ideas as to where we were going as a university, and we attempted to achieve those through developing pro-

grams and hiring faculty. Now we must demand of ourselves, as we revisit the dreams we had, that we not destroy those dreams and ideas but that we make the possibilities better. A question that comes up, of course, as we look about our own state is, If we do make some of the hard decisions and let certain programs wither, then what does it gain us? As for our reputation, it is important to have only good programs. As for our finances, we don't save much by letting faculty go. That is not what we are trying to do at this point. We will lose some subsidy if we say we are no longer going to have graduate students in certain areas. We must be ready to take what we save and reinvest it in areas that we want to make first rate.

The subsidy formulation offers a certain amount of protection here, but I think that protection needs to be examined. Should we reassess faculty efforts in areas that we no longer need and attempt to retrain faculty within? This question has been brought up time and time again and, frankly, the answer is that you are not really going to retrain faculty. We can, however, consolidate some programs within our own universities and perhaps bring together a critical mass of faculty within some general program areas. An example might be to reorganize the department of journalism, the department of telecommunications, and the department of rhetoric and communication into a department of mass communication, and realign the programs so that they bring the best faculty together within those three areas. One thing we need to protect against: You don't bring marginal faculties together and make them a good faculty. I have my zero-to-two measurement, that is, you measure the quality of a faculty from zero to two, one being average; and if you bring two faculties together you multiply their numerical values. Thus,

if you start out with two faculties, each with a quality measure less than one, then you are going to have one faculty that has measure much less than one. And I think this has been the result in many areas where attempts were made to unify weak faculties.

The graduate dean's job centers on recognizing excellence. That is the primary issue of this conference. Our colleagues depend on us to try to define excellence; indeed, that may be our sole job. I think of the time-worn adage that says, essentially, As we look at these possible changes give me the courage to change that which I can change, give me the patience to accept that which I cannot change, and give me the wisdom to know the difference between the two. Remembering this adage and putting our best skills to work, we can have an impact on achieving academic excellence.

Robert E. Powell is Dean of the Graduate College, Kent State University, Kent, Ohio.

The University's Assessment of Excellence—A Provost's View

Noel L. Leathers

Assessing excellence has been an agenda topic for probably half of the educational conferences held in this country over the last decade. Unfortunately, most of the commentary decries the inability to assess programmatic quality and bemoans the lack of a panacea to solve this problem once and for all.

A graduate program is a complex phenomenon, partially scientific and partially artistic. Therefore, assessing excellence in a graduate program inevitably has many component parts. I would like to view this assessment from five perspectives: students, recruitment, research activity, accreditation, and relationships.

Students:

Looking at a graduate program immediately raises a question about its products. What do our graduates do after completing their studies? What fields do they pursue? Graduate deans certainly can pick up more than one clue about the quality of a graduate program by talking to students as they

complete their theses or dissertations. Are they satisfied with their educational experience? Did they feel challenged? Were they delayed unnecessarily by shortages of faculty, equipment, resources, clerical support, library holdings, computer facilities, or other factors?

Comments by graduate students at this stage may prove quite constructive and will, in most instances, offer candid insights. We should remember, though, that their comments reflect their view at that point. These same students' evaluations of their graduate programs might change drastically after two or three years in their professional fields.

A useful quantitative measure is the number of applicants for a graduate program *vis-a-vis* the number of students accepted. An extremely high acceptance rate should raise one's suspicions. Another test, one that can combine qualitative and quantitative features, is the follow-up questionnaire. If prepared carefully, it can point out valuable improvements in the program.

The *theses and dissertations* students produce are another vital test of excellence, for they give you a clear idea of the academic standards upheld by program faculty. Several indicators emerge from these works: the quality of the English language, the logic of the research design, the substance of the research project.

Recruitment:

The care and thoroughness exercised in recruiting new faculty reflect the existing faculty's self-judgment. If your faculty have good morale, pride and commitment, the chances

are that any new faculty recruited will reflect similar attitudes.

Graduate deans have a vital role to play in rendering some judgment about the quality of applicants' *vitae*. The usual process—reviewing applicants' publications, offering a graduate seminar during the campus visit, and discussing thoroughly the applicants' research interests—will very clearly reflect the faculty's thinking about its current level of quality and its hopes for the future.

Crucial to obtaining program excellence is recruiting new faculty who are self-starters. Research is highly personal and individualized, and recruitment should discover which people are the self-starters. When I ask prospective faculty members about their dissertation research, I expect their eyes to light up and the words to come out faster than I can digest them. If a candidate does not project excitement about work that has required so much effort, I am not sure about his or her capacity to be a self-starter as a faculty member.

Having recruited the best scholars, the graduate dean should serve as a resource person, offering encouragement to graduate faculty, particularly those who maintain a high level of productivity in teaching, advising, and research. Graduate deans can show support for faculty in several ways, such as agreeing to sponsor guest seminars, for example, and inviting lectures by graduate students.

Research Activity:

An excellent graduate program must sustain a high level of research activity. The program must build to a critical mass

so that it becomes a magnet, attracting good graduate students, research dollars, and overhead funds. Overhead funds generated through research grants can and should be used to further research activity. As graduate deans, you have a vital role to play in ensuring that funds for research are used correctly and developed to the fullest extent.

Accreditation:

Another process that affords some clues as to the quality of programs is the visit of an accreditation team. I have found that accreditation teams are concerned primarily with input rather than output. They want to know how much support we are giving the department, how many new faculty positions have been created, how much money is going to special library collections, equipment, or travel.

Accreditation is always geared to minimum standards and therefore seldom deals with questions of excellence. That emphasis can be misleading. As graduate deans, you have an obligation to press the accrediting team, through formal or informal discussion, for their independent assessment of the program. These individuals are experts and should have a keen sense of what constitutes an excellent program. Since our institutions are paying the freight, we should try to improve the baggage these teams eventually deliver and use the process to our own best interests.

Relationships:

A high quality graduate program will relate in some fashion to professional groups in its general region. It will also

have a relationship with government agencies at the federal, state, or local levels, depending upon the particular discipline. If these relationships do not exist, attend to their nurturing. They can be a virtual fount of information about how our students will fare in the job market and how we can improve not only our programs but also our graduates' prospects.

No single institution can ever be all things to all people. High quality graduate programs are, therefore, the result of an internal selection process that has built on areas of strength. As graduate deans, you face an imposing challenge, for you must ensure that excellence develops, despite all the other demands upon your own energy and the resources you manage. I wish you every success.

Noel L. Leathers was Senior Vice-President and Provost, The University of Akron, Akron, Ohio and is now on the faculty of the Department of History at The University of Akron.

The Administration of Excellence—A University's Options

Wimberly C. Royster

I will begin by giving a brief history of the organization of my university. At the University of Kentucky we have two major sectors: the Medical Center, which includes basic science and clinical programs, and Academic Affairs, which includes academic and graduate programs. Each sector has a chancellor as its head administrator. In a recent reorganization, my office was given the title "Vice Chancellor for Research and Dean of the Graduate School." All the research activities of the institution and research administration are channeled through this office, as are all the graduate education programs. My office is the only one in the University, except for the president's, that has responsibility in both sectors.

However, that doesn't mean any more power, necessarily. We are dealing with two different types of entities. For example, one group, the Medical Center, is much better funded by the ordinary standards of academic programs and the other group, Academic Affairs, is always rooting and scrounging for funds in any way it can in order to buy equipment, research supplies, and the like. For instance, the Medical Center has a physicians' plan whereby physicians are paid primarily from a private corporation which also returns a

certain percentage to the College of Medicine through an agreement with the University. So the College of Medicine has a fair amount of money which is not available to many other departments; therefore, the basic sciences in the College of Medicine are much better supported than units in Academic Affairs. My office, in addition to administering the research and graduate education programs, has the responsibility for several research institutes. Some of these are fairly large, e.g., a Tobacco and Health Research Institute which is supported by cigarette tax (one-half cent a package yields about $3.5 million a year). We have the Mining and Minerals Research Institute, funded by the state, and other kinds of institutes normally found in a research university—water resources, social sciences research, and so forth, all assigned to this one office. My comments today will come from what I have encountered in this office.

In addition, I am involved in the planning and budgetary process—not that it has a great deal of impact. As someone said yesterday, "You can have all kinds of formulas, but if you don't get funded with the formula then you still have the same old decisions to make, whether you have the formula or not." So when the funds are allocated to the institution, everybody tries to determine what part they get. Now, with the new organization, we have two groups vying for the funds rather than the funds being centered in the president's office. I'll say a little more about the planning and budgetary process later.

When Dean Powell called me to give a talk, he mentioned the topic "administration of excellence." It seems the two words we in graduate education, and throughout higher education, overuse most are excellence and quality. We think we know what they mean, but really we don't. Can everybody be

excellent? Excellence means that, in comparison, one is better than or superior to most everybody else. It is like average: everybody wants to be above average, but that is impossible. The only place I know where everyone can be above average is in Graduate School. The grade of C is supposedly average, but we give very few grades below C—everybody makes an A, B, or C. What we imply is that everybody is above average. If we are asked how to make a C student a B student, the reply is to enroll him or her in Graduate School. Excellence or high quality depends to a great extent on reputation. An institution may have a reputation for offering an excellent program when this is absolutely not the case. I think this has emerged in the Jones-Lindsey report, or the Assessment of Research Doctorates. I saw an article recently in a political science journal, written by some faculty of the University of Nebraska, which attempted to take into account many of the measures of excellence included in the report. The authors were addressing factors other than reputation and they found no correlation between the data and reputation. The institutions' rankings were all jumbled around. If you look for reputation ratings and then look at publications and grants and other measures included in the report, you find no correlation. But the focus on *reputation* is what appeared in the press. Excellence, then, is something perceived.

Indeed, excellence in our programs often depends upon our own perception. We must define what excellence means in the context of our institution, then determine whether we want it. Do we mean excellence as compared to national institutions, regional institutions, benchmark-type institutions? As I have already said, not every institution can be excellent, not every program can be excellent. Still, we must strive for the best we can achieve, that is, we must strive for high quality.

For instance, some institutions are research oriented; however, an institution does not have to be research oriented to be excellent. There are liberal arts colleges which have excellent programs. They have faculty who are innovative and ingenious. Their reputation is not based on research and advanced study.

The case of larger, more comprehensive institutions is different. I remember being in a graduate deans' meeting some years ago when a question was raised by a graduate dean from a predominantly black institution about the relationship between perceived quality of the institution and the capability of offering doctoral programs. He asked, "Have you ever known, do you know, or can you name an institution which is considered to be prestigious, outstanding, good, or words you may want to use to express excellence, that doesn't have doctoral programs?" There was complete silence—nobody could name one. He was thinking in terms of his institution, which was approved by the state to offer master's degrees, not doctorates. To build the prestige of an institution you have to go for research. This is unfortunate in a way, but it is a consequence of our reputation ratings.

In pursuing excellence, we must pose three questions. (1) How do we recognize it? (2) If we have it, how do we keep it? (3) If we don't have it, how do we get it?

Recognition of excellence is something that each institution has to do on its own. Most institutions have a pretty good idea of whether they have excellent programs. There are many ways to make these determinations, as you know. Therefore, I want to talk about the other two questions, how we keep it and how we plan for it. If an institution has an excellent program, it must be fed and nourished or it won't

stay excellent. High quality does not remain constant all by itself. There are two initial requisites for excellence: planning and commitment. The commitment to excellence must extend all the way from the top to the bottom, from the state level all the way down to the faculty, and from the faculty back up to the state. Without commitment, excellence will not be attained. For state institutions, commitment starts with the regents, commission on higher education, the policy-making group by whatever name. The individuals who serve on these boards must believe that excellent programs are important to the state. Next, good leadership is required in the institutions to develop such programs.

Another important factor is funding—it costs money to have good programs, but it costs money to have *bad* programs. This doesn't mean a tremendous influx of money is needed to develop certain programs in an institution; however, excellent programs cannot be operated on a shoestring budget. It is particularly important to look at the targeted disciplines. In the hard sciences it's impossible to develop or maintain excellent programs in areas such as biology, physics, or chemistry, without tremendous amounts of money. The instructional and research equipment is extremely expensive. We often hear, Well, we'll put a little money in and then our faculty will get external funds from DOE or NSF to support the program. That's fine, but if the base support does not exist, excellence will not be sustained, because outside money fluctuates. Good research requires good facilities. I think that whoever in the state is responsible for allocating resources must be willing to make decisions that reflect the mission of the institutions. How these decisions are made in a particular state depends upon how the state system is organized.

Our state, Kentucky, provides an interesting situation. We started formula funding two years ago. We have one land grant research institution and one other doctoral granting institution. Further, there are five regional institutions that by law do not grant graduate degrees beyond the master's (primarily these specialize in education). They have a history of political strength. Initially, the formula favored research institutions, so when it was presented to the legislature there was considerable infighting. Eventually, the institutions had to back off. The Council on Higher Education had to revise its stand and support an enrollment driven formula again, rather than a mission-oriented formula. In the last two years some compromises have been made and we are now back on the mission-oriented formula, but the problem may not be solved. In a state like ours which is nearly six hundred miles long, it is difficult to get the kind of cooperation necessary for a unified position. Each section of the state would like the formula weighted in its favor. This is one of the forces that works against the building of excellence in higher education—the political force—and I don't know how to get around it.

As for university administration, we must have commitment all the way up and down. It is very easy for presidents, vice-presidents, deans, and department chairs to say, Yes, we are top quality, we are a quality institution or college or program. We must look at what we *do* rather than what we *say*. We must observe the messages we convey to our faculty by our institutional practices.

I would like to discuss briefly our budget planning process. It is not very good, but it is better than it was. Kentucky is on a biennial budget. We start our budget process about eigh-

teen months prior to the beginning of the next biennium. One of the problems of planning in state institutions is that we don't know what kind of funding may be available two years hence or what the Council on Higher Education is willing to propose to the legislature or what the legislature will do. Universities may go through extensive planning only to receive continuation budgets. Academic administrators don't get very excited about new approaches when there are not enough funds to support current programs.

It is very interesting to observe the planning process in the Medical Center vis-à-vis the planning process in Academic Affairs. The planning in the Medical Center is far more administration driven than it is in Academic Affairs. Initially the administration does more of the planning and decision making and disseminates to the faculty; in Academic Affairs, the process is somewhat reversed.

There are advantages and disadvantages in each process. In planning for the coming biennial budget period, the chancellor's cabinet, which includes vice chancellors and the dean of the medical school, identified certain areas to be targeted for excellence. These decisions were based upon availability of private funding, certain perceived strengths in the faculty, and areas where major research institutions must have strength in the new technological age. Three centers of excellence were selected: cancer, genetic engineering, and cardiovascular diseases. At any rate, the dean of the medical school notified the chairs and faculty of the decision. Some departments were willing to participate by recruiting faculty who would also have appointments in the centers. The administration has the leverage to target new positions to the centers. It remains to be seen what level of cooperation will eventually occur, but suffice it to say that the centers are being es-

tablished and the faculty know where the administration's emphasis lies.

In the other sector of the University, Academic Affairs, an assessment of the strength of the faculty research in areas important to institutional goals and state economic development would be made by deans and chairs at the request of the chancellor. Then the planning process evolves and moves up through the system.

Regardless of the process, planning for excellence requires an enormous effort. The University of Minnesota's retrenchment plan is noteworthy. They were able to absorb traumatic cuts and still maintain good programs and attract good faculty. They did it by starting with faculty groups. They began planning long before the cuts came and asked where positions should be cut if need be? How should they reorganize? How could they maintain excellence? How could they keep their faculty? They are somewhat out of the woods now. Several institutions were raiding them—especially the sun belt institutions such as Arizona and Texas—and the legislature in Minnesota became concerned about the situation. It is my understanding that they allocated $3 million to meet offers to the university's best professors in order to keep them at the University of Minnesota. It worked. This is a very good example of how an institution can maintain excellence through planning. They would never have succeeded if they hadn't already decided that certain programs could be cut and that they were going to reserve what funds they had for their excellent programs.

One of the most important actions by a university administration which influences excellence is the reward system. How is a reward system implemented? Does the system reward the

strengths and the mission of the institution? If it is a research institution, does the institution really reward research or does it reward time and rank? How are salaries determined? Who determines them? Do chairmen really believe in the reward system or would they rather appease everyone and spread the money fairly evenly? Promotions and tenure are very important indicators in the reward system. I sometimes think administrators don't realize what kind of signals promotions and tenure send to faculty, especially the young faculty. When the young faculty members come up for tenure, they watch very closely the decision of the senior faculty and administrators. If we don't hold high standards for promotions, then we cannot expect to have a high quality faculty. If in evaluating research they see that their department counts papers without giving any weight to the quality, then it isn't very long until faculty learn that publishing is the game and that is what it takes for merit increases. Hence, they find some journal to publish a paper or two and there is your merit increase. We send many signals to the faculty by the way we manage promotion, tenure, and merit raises.

Another problem involving administrative leadership occurs in universities that have rotating chairmanships. Sometimes when difficult decisions are required regarding promotions, merit raises, and the like, the chairman, knowing that he or she will be rotating back into the department as a faculty member, has a difficult time making decisions about colleagues.

Let me say a few words about promotions and tenure at our institution. The department chair recommends on promotion and tenure to the dean of the college. The dean has a subcommittee that reviews the recommendations of the chair. After being reviewed by the dean, the file is reviewed

by an area committee, appointed by the president, that crosses colleges. That is, the biological sciences area committee reviews agriculture, biology, and basic sciences in medicine; humanities and social sciences review business, economics, education, sociology, and political science, etc. After being evaluated by the area committee the file is sent to the graduate dean. The graduate dean then makes a recommendation to the chancellor, who makes a final decision.

This system has been in effect for nearly twenty years and it needs to be altered. There are ways to beat the system. There is a tendency to agree with the departmental and faculty recommendations. As a case proceeds with positive recommendations through the system, it tends to gain momentum. The University administration must stand its ground on demanding quality performance. We deny a number of the recommendations that have moved up the system. It doesn't go over very well, but it has to be done.

Another matter we haven't discussed is what effect unionization has upon excellence. Some say it is difficult to maintain excellence with a unionized faculty. The state of Florida faculty is unionized, but it is not unionized on the basis of individual institutions. This may work better than where individual institutions have unions because evidently the local group has less clout in dealing with administration. In statewide unionization, the bargaining is with a state board, I believe. On a recent accreditation visit in Florida, I heard many complaints about the effect the union had on building quality programs. But luckily, Florida has circumvented the problem somewhat by injecting a lot of money into higher education. Their plan is to attract people of higher academic stature for preferred positions at higher salaries.

An important factor in administering excellence is the allocation of resources in the budgeting process. Administrators must decide where excellence is desired and allocate funds accordingly. We don't always look at the areas where strength exists to build excellence. Sometimes areas of excellence are targeted because they are important to the institution's mission. We see this occurring in universities and colleges today. If an institution is located in an area where it can establish cooperative research linkages with industry, then the institution may order its priorities so as to capitalize on this linkage. Hence, there are times when centers of excellence should be created even though no high quality program exists. This means taking resources from somebody else—not an easy task.

Reallocating funds internally tells the faculty whether the institution really believes in administering excellence. How are indirect costs allocated? How are fund balances allocated? How are salary reimbursements handled from grants and contracts? If a faculty member has fifty percent of his or her salary paid from a grant, is fifty percent of the salary returned to the department, or is it placed in a pool and allocated to other units in the institution? We find that our faculty are very concerned about incentives. They are really concerned about the university's administration providing them an incentive to do research. They sometimes feel that the administration is looking for reasons *not* to provide incentives rather than encouraging them in what they are doing. Due to a shortage of funds last year, we were not able to return salary reimbursements to the departments in our Academic Affairs sector. We have many part-time teachers in Arts and Sciences who have been supported by salary savings and salary reimbursements. These resources are pooled and

the college hires mathematics and English teachers to teach freshmen courses and remedial work. The faculty are becoming very concerned and are wondering why they should knock themselves out to get research grants when their department doesn't get any reward for it. They may get a research assistant or two in their lab out of the grant, but they don't see anything coming back to their department.

In the Medical Center, since faculty don't have the teaching responsibilities of a college like Arts and Sciences, all salary reimbursement dollars are returned to the College of Medicine. In 1982 that amounted to nearly a million dollars. You can provide a lot of incentives and goodwill with a million dollars. It makes a difference! A great deal of pressure was exerted to get this decision. A study performed this past summer indicated other colleges in the Medical Center did not receive the major part of their salary reimbursements. Once it was learned that one college received the major portion of salary reimbursements, other colleges pursued the issue and now there has been a change in policy to return them to the colleges. These funds now provide for graduate assistantships, equipment, travel, post-doctorals, etc.

Other internal funds include indirect costs. Each institution has its own procedure for managing indirect costs. They are a source of extreme importance to the faculty researcher, who has a feeling of ownership. Since they generate the indirect costs, researchers want these monies returned to their programs. At our institution about one-half of the indirect cost earnings are returned to the general fund, and the other half is allocated to the Graduate School for support of research and graduate education. About ten percent of the indirect costs earnings are returned by the Graduate School to the department generating them. The remainder is allocated

to graduate fellowships, research equipment, start-up funds for young faculty, and a few pilot programs.

In the administration of excellence there is another factor we often overlook—providing a structure to protect our good faculty against having their time nibbled away. Too many committee assignments take our faculty away from their research. More and more faculty are refusing to serve on committees, preferring instead to stay in the laboratory or the library or work at home. Many of these faculty are program builders—and we *need* program builders—all stars don't necessarily make a program. It's like a basketball team: it takes teamwork to build high quality programs and hold the program together. It seems the faculty who are best at holding the program together are the ones we call upon the most. We are not solving this problem to the extent we should.

Now for a few words about graduate deans' involvement in administering excellence in an institution. Some universities have one graduate school for the whole institution; other universities have graduate schools in various colleges. Whoever is responsible for graduate education must be involved in the decision-making process. They need to be in an advisory capacity and must have the confidence of the vice-president or provost. The graduate deans must be involved in evaluating programs and assessing the quality of the faculty, students, and curriculum. One graduate dean told me he used the "shining light" method. By this method, he would select a department which had made excellent progress in its program and publish data about the quality of students admitted, research by the faculty, awards of both faculty and students, etc. Another dean took a different approach. He published similar data about programs which

were not making progress, comparing them with the better programs in the institution.

Another example of a similar nature is the monitoring of doctoral dissertation oral examinations. When I became graduate dean I was very concerned about the dissertation defense. The Graduate School rule at our university requires that the graduate dean appoint one member to the final dissertation defense. It may be a faculty member from any area. We had reports from outside examiners that in some programs the defense committee would ask questions such as How did you like the program? Do you have a job? Where do you plan to go? Tell us about yourself, and adjourn the committee. We solved this problem by developing a questionnaire for the outside examiner, asking him or her to complete it and return it to us. This questionnaire inquires about the nature of the examination, quality of questions, quality of response, administration of examination, and degree of participation of the committee. We keep this information confidential until the end of the year, when a report is made to the dean of the college. The quality of the defense improved immensely. Graduate deans can take action when they learn of these kinds of problems, and they *must* act in order to promote excellence. Graduate deans can take still other steps in administering excellence. But in taking these steps, we must remember to depend on our strongest faculty to set policy for research and graduate education.

Graduate deans must also recognize those situations that work against excellence. Political decisions, student demands, federal regulations, the threat of law suits, and distribution of effort may consume deans' and faculty members' time, making excellence in graduate education difficult to obtain. Despite all these complexities, however, excellence lies within

our reach. By choosing carefully, we can take programs that are already strong and make them excellent, or we can identify programs that, for strategic and political reasons, *must* be made excellent. Whatever our course, we face enormous challenges—but we can also look ahead to the rewards that excellence brings.

Wimberly C. Royster is Vice Chancellor of Research and Dean of the Graduate School, University of Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky; Member of the Board of Directors, Council of Graduate Schools.

Salt Fork I Conference Participants

J. Wayne Baker
Interim Associate Dean
Graduate Studies and Research
The University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325

Ronald E. Barr
Associate Provost
Graduate and Research Program
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

William B. Coulter
Deputy Chancellor
Ohio Board of Regents
3600 State Office Tower
30 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Julia A. Froble
Secretary to the Dean
Graduate College
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Elaine H. Hairston
Director of Special Programs
Ohio Board of Regents
3600 State Office Tower
30 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Garrett T. Heberlein
Dean of the Graduate College
and Vice Provost for Research
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

Sally M. Hotchkiss
Associate Provost and Dean for Graduate Studies
Youngstown State University
Youngstown, OH 44555

Robert F. Howarth, Jr.
Member, Ohio Board of Regents
Senior Vice President
The Huntington National Bank
17 S. High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Helen H. James
Member, Ohio Board of Regents
4871 Miller Road
Celina, OH 45822

Gary H. Knock
Associate Dean
The Graduate School and Research
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056

Richard D. Koshel
Associate Dean
Arts and Sciences
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

Noel L. Leathers
Senior Vice President and Provost
The University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325

Georgia E. Lesh-Laurie
Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, OH 44115

Paul J. Olscamp
University President
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

William Poland
Associate Dean of the Graduate School
The Ohio State University
Columbus, OH 43210

Robert E. Powell
Dean of the Graduate College
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Wimberly C. Royster
Vice Chancellor of Research and Dean of the Graduate School
Member of the Board of Directors Council of Graduate Schools
University of Kentucky
Lexington, KY 40506

Donald C. Thomas
Dean of the School of Graduate Studies
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435

Herbert Waltzer
Acting Dean of the Graduate
School and Research
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056

Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study
Salt Fork II
Conference on Optimizing the Impact of Selective Excellence

November 1–2, 1984
Salt Fork State Park

Thursday, November 1, 1984

1:00P.M.–1:05P.M. Welcome-Robert E. Powell, Dean of the Graduate College, Kent State University

1:05P.M.–4:00P.M. Setting Priorities (Short Term and Long Term) to Achieve Selective Excellence—A Panel Presentation

Comments-Charles J. Ping, President, Ohio University; Michael R. Ferrari, Provost, Wright State University; and Harold L. Allen, Dean, Graduate School, University of Toledo

Moderator-Georgia E. Lesh-Laurie, Dean of Graduate Studies and Research, Cleveland State University

7:40P.M.–9:30P.M. Another State's Experience—How to Optimize "Good" Programs and Faculty

Comments-Leo F. Solt, Dean of the Graduate School, Indiana University

Moderator-John B. Gabel, Acting Dean, The Graduate School, Ohio State University

Friday, November 2, 1984

9:00A.M.–11:30A.M. The Chancellor's View of Selective Excellence

Comments-William B. Coulter, Chancellor, Ohio Board of Regents

Moderator-Donald C. Thomas, Dean, School of Graduate Studies, Wright State University

Introduction

William B. Coulter, Chancellor

In the Fall of 1983, at the first conference on excellence held at Salt Fork State Park Lodge, we gathered to focus on the concept of excellence and how it might be sought and developed in graduate and undergraduate education. Our initial discussions were necessarily abstract, since terms such as "excellence" and "quality" convey very different meanings to different audiences, even within the academic community. At the second conference, we made substantial progress toward fashioning a reality from an idea. The intervening year gave us, administrators and faculty alike, the time to reflect and the opportunity to set out the major outlines of a comprehensive program for Ohio's colleges and universities.

These conferences illustrate some of the lessons that the last twenty years hold for us. Higher education may not again see the prosperity of the '60s—the ambitious building projects, the growth of faculties, the high enrollments. On the other hand, let's hope we'll not again see the painful retrenchment of the '70s, when resources had become scarce, and we had to decide how to do the least damage to already lean programs.

The mid-'80s have brought higher education to new ground. Although this can hardly be called a "boom" era, the economic climate is more positive now than it has been for several years. Attitudes are changing as well: the public is more receptive to the idea of improving education, particularly given economic losses sustained as international trade competition has grown. A consensus is building once again about what constitutes sound academic preparation, what an educated person should know and be able to do, what an advanced society must demand of its educational system.

We now have an opportunity to establish excellence not just as a priority on our agenda but also as a reality in our universities. For Ohio to prosper in the decades ahead, our institutions, programs and faculty must provide not just an adequate education but the best education possible.

The Salt Fork conferences clarified our ideas about quality and excellence. These meetings gave us a chance to pursue new ideas about leadership and explore new directions in programming. We have begun a course of action that will strengthen Ohio's system of higher education and help our citizens meet the challenges of the future.

Setting Priorities (Short Term and Long Term) To Achieve Selective Excellence

Charles J. Ping

In my remarks I am going to be taking a little different approach to excellence. The most important external condition is the climate which makes quality possible, a climate which translates into resources, private and public funding. The critical internal condition is the structures or the processes which institutions use to set priorities. The making of judgments is a necessary condition—but not a sufficient condition. Resources are required.

What is different about the current climate, it seems to me, is the increased possibility of a change in the state support. This is the first time in ten years that I have been excited about the state of Ohio's support for higher education. Formula budgeting was one of the real strengths in Ohio, but more is needed. The state now seems to be moving beyond formula budgeting. The basic character of formula budgeting is equity. The processes of determining funding have been rational. The only problem is that the funding has been inadequate. Now I think we have an income base and enough public support for increased funding and for selective funding.

The first priority is to provide student subsidy across the whole system, to move the state closer to the national pattern of support for students and to lower the students' share of the cost. This basic theme has already been sounded in the Ohio Board of Regents' recommendations to the Office of Budget and Management. Two additional elements seem to me to be absolutely essential. The first is provision for the elements of ongoing operational costs which are not funded in the operating budget, namely, instructional and research equipment and repair and renovation funds. Both are ongoing operating costs, not sporadic costs.

To accomplish all this—that is, to lower the share of the cost borne by the student, to build into the structure of funding models provision for equipment and to fund maintenance and repair as part of the basic subsidy—will require a very major infusion of new state dollars. Selective excellence, in my opinion, will not get very far or be very productive without that adjustment.

The discussions of selective funding of excellence which have gone on since December 1983, building on experience with two programs in the current appropriation bill, have developed many of the patterns suggested in general discussions of quality and excellence in education. A report on the conditions of excellence, *Involvement in Education*, offers a key theme of outcome rather than input as a measure of quality. The measure is the impact on students. The Ohio Program Excellence Award involved a conscious effort to determine and assess impact of the programs on students as a condition for the award. Peer assessment was a theme present in the Eminent Scholar Awards. That theme was also used in the Edison Grant Program. This whole emerging effort last year suggests some of the basic patterns of decision making.

If the first priority is to deal with the issue of the funding base for higher education and the conditions of excellence, then the second priority is to find ways to move this whole set of proposals. They are only proposals. We have no reason to assume that they will be accepted in the governor's office. What is required is to see that these exciting proposals become fact, that funding for higher education be designed to recognize and support that quality, not just quantitative measures in subsidy formula.

The process entails an effort to build a base of understanding and support, starting first with the campus and with the natural constituencies of the campuses, and then reaching out to the general public. It should be a concentrated effort over the next six months as we move toward the end of June and the shaping of the budget for the next biennium. I am convinced that this is a window of opportunity for education in Ohio that probably will not appear again in the next decade. The climate is right at the national and state levels to build a base of public understanding that would support legislative efforts for funding at a level of adequacy and to move a giant step beyond in the efforts to selectively fund excellence.

The whole proposal has been artfully created. There is something in it for everyone. It has an emotional appeal at all levels. Program Excellence Awards provide funds for undergraduate programs. The Eminent Scholar Endowments largely serve graduate education and research. I think these two programs will continue in the current appropriations.

The concept of an academic challenge is an intriguing proposal because, it seems to me, it will force institutions to develop processes and procedures designed to set priorities and

to make judgments. It involves setting aside one percent of the instructional budget for the campus to decide on priorities. Campuses will have an unusual opportunity to develop a program of national stature, to adjust subsidy by more than enrollment in that program. It will force campuses to do strategic planning. More importantly, the planning will now have cash value. What it means is that Miami University can decide to develop a program of national stature in one area; Ohio State University in another; Ohio University can move in yet a third area. The basic subsidy line for these programs will be adjusted to give an unusual level of funding. For example, if the current subsidy line for a student is $1,500, a $2,000 increase built into a base maintained over the years will make a difference. Where the decision is made is an important part of the concept. It is based on the campus and not in a central authority. This is important when providing a cash value to stimulate strategic planning.

The fourth proposal relevant to the universities is a research and technology challenge. This still needs to be defined but in essence it will provide a partial match of funds based on sponsor expenditures for research. Also, funds will be provided to match external grants for equipment from private sources.

All of this has great potential, but, at this point, all of this is nothing more than proposal. This first priority has to be to move the ideas from proposal to fact.

Problems and obstacles need to be discussed. The essential condition for all of this to have much meaning is a major subsidy adjustment, an increase of a magnitude that, once defined, will seem staggering to some. It will only happen if higher education gets a larger share of the state budget. An

obstacle blocking a larger share will be other state needs, including funding for public schools. A second obstacle is campus opposition. Some will see this whole program as being too narrow. There was a distinct feeling on the part of some faculty that they were left out. I think this is partially true. If this attitude grows, campus support will erode. A particular concern is disciplines in the humanities.

While there is a great deal of verbal commitment to judgments of quality on campus, when this actually gets translated into making decisions about particular programs, the support weakens. This is vividly reflected in efforts at retrenchment. I know of no single case study where faculty embraced efforts at reallocating resources in order to achieve higher quality. Generally, such efforts produce a great deal of tension and static and, in turn, opposition to proposals at the state level for selective funding. Another problem is the politics of decision making. I was genuinely surprised that the process of Program Excellence and Eminent Scholars did not get mired in politics. Here and there one can hear the voices of various legislators wanting to know, Why, by God, didn't they choose schools in my district. Politics can become an obstacle in translating proposals into legislation.

Another potential obstacle to moving the proposal for selective funding of excellence is the very words we use. They can carry some very strong negative connotations. For example, "excellence" is taken by some as a form of racism; they argue that minorities will not be well served by such a program.

In the next few months, as we attempt to move from the proposal to legislation, you will see a whole series of critiques of university education appearing in the news. They will raise

questions about the performance of universities and mock the theme of excellence.

While the obstacles are formidable, the effort is important to set the pattern for Ohio education in the 1980s and beyond.

Charles J. Ping is President of Ohio University, Athens, Ohio.

Setting Priorities to Achieve Selective Excellence

Michael R. Ferrari

We are discussing a topic today that engulfs much of contemporary organizational life. In the boardrooms of America's corporations, educational institutions, hospitals and health care agencies, and most other important formal organizations, people are paying much closer attention to the ways by which organizations nurture exceptional quality, performance, distinction, merit . . . indeed, excellence.

Peters and Waterman's very popular book, *In Search of Excellence: Lessons from America's Best Run Companies* (1982), is simply one of many recent publications providing insights and guidelines for the strategic shaping of organizations toward being the best at what they are, what they do, and what they can achieve. A quick sampling of today's influential management book titles well conveys the general fascination and current interests of both business academics and practitioners in this area. For example, some of you may be familiar with: *Beyond the Quick Fix: Managing Five Tracks to Organizational Success* (Kilmann, 1984), *Decision Making at the Top: The Shaping of Strategic Decisions* (Lorsch and Donaldson, 1983), *Guiding Beliefs: Managing Corporate Culture* (Davis, 1984), *The Organizational Unconscious: How to Create the Corpo-*

rate Culture You Want and Need (Allen and Kraft, 1982), *Organizational Culture and Leadership* (March, 1985), *American Spirit: Visions of a New Corporate Culture* (Miller, 1984), *Silicon Valley Fever* (Rogers and Larson, 1984), and *The Change Masters* (Kanter, 1983).

The heightened concern and search for excellence and the links to strategic planning and corporate culture are stimulated, to be sure, by the unsettling realization that broad-scale economic, industrial, and technological advances of Japan and West Germany during the last decade match and surpass our own. There is ample evidence that America's preeminence in the twentieth century in management philosophy, administrative talent, and worker productivity is being challenged successfully in a wide array of international industrial markets.

At all levels in education, similar concerns and anxieties are evident. Last year's report of the National Commission of Excellence in Education stated (and possibly overstated) the case rather dramatically: "If an unfriendly foreign power had attempted to impose on America the mediocre educational performance that exists today, we might well have viewed it as an act of war." Several national and regional reports since then have reinforced the themes that Johnny can't read, teachers can't teach, and increasingly the nation can't compete in industry, commerce, even science and technology, where the United States was once the undisputed leader.

We are mindful also that within the last two weeks, the spotlight has shifted from our elementary and secondary schools to higher education, particularly the state and condition of undergraduate education. Similar assessments of graduate education are not far behind. A panel established

by the National Institute of Education praised American higher education's response to rapid expansion followed by years of constricting resources and leveling enrollments. In its report, *Involvement in Learning: Realizing the Potential of American Higher Education*, the panel also concluded that "the realities of student learning, curricular coherence, the quality of facilities, faculty morale, and academic standards no longer measure up to our expectations. The gaps between the ideal and the actual are serious warning signals." "To assure excellence," according to the NIE report, "our colleges, community colleges and universities should establish and maintain high standards of student and institutional performance. The results (or 'outcomes') of the education offered by these institutions must be measured against their clearly and publicly articulated standards of performance."

There are few issues any more pressing than how we go about positioning or repositioning our institutions, especially in setting priorities for the short term and long term to achieve selective excellence. How we go about identifying, selecting, and nurturing those particular programs of sufficient capacity, quality, and promise to be judged centers or magnets of superior quality appear with greater frequency and urgency on all our agendas. There clearly is no corner on truth regarding this topic, but I would like to address a few considerations that I believe are important as we plan for the future.

The need and willingness to make choices among each of our institutions' array of programs are not new to higher education. Each of us has come through some difficult times in the last decade or so in this regard. We have learned some important lessons in coping with abrupt and/or sustained underfunding of public higher education. We have developed

planning and budgeting systems and resource reallocation models to respond to enrollment fluctuations. We have educated and braced our campuses for the effects of the general decline predicted in the traditional college-age population through the early 1990s. We have established program review processes and systems to help us assess quality in undergraduate and graduate programs. We have developed and experimented with an array of approaches, strategies, and methods for doing more with less, for making difficult and controversial choices in selected program reductions, for becoming increasingly skilled managers of decline, and for managing smarter and better.

It is little wonder that the increased state support during the last two years in operating, capital, and program-enhancement dollars, and the encouraging proposals of the governor, chancellor, and Board of Regents for improved selective excellence funding (while providing continuing baseline support) are encouraging measures. Along with our agendas for strengthening undergraduate and graduate education, research, and partnerships with the industrial community, these initiatives present us with additional opportunities and challenges. In many respects, the challenges now confronting higher education may be as significant for our long-term health as industry's responses to increased global competition, governmental deregulation, and a host of complex social, economic, and political forces are for the economic revitalization of our nation.

Strategic planning is becoming increasingly prevalent in higher education although each of us goes at it somewhat differently based on our institution's history, governance model, style of institutional leadership, and mix of constraints and opportunities.

The results of strategic planning processes at several universities are gaining popular attention. For example,

1. Carnegie Mellon has received praise for catapulting consciously its cognitive psychology program from thirty-fifth to one of the top few in the nation; its computer science department has achieved prominence also in a few short years; it has produced metallurgy studies with strong ties to the steel and coal industry; its talented applicant pool has grown by fifteen percent.

2. The University of Miami has decided to reduce its enrollment from ten thousand in 1982 to eighty-five hundred by 1985 as a result of increased student selectivity. Miami's plan makes frank value judgments about the merits of each college and school, and new incentive budgeting systems are tied to student recruiting.

3. I suspect that most institutions have picked up the pace in strategic planning linked to excellence. At Wright State, a newly formed planning council has been reshaping our mission statement to capture explicitly the distinctive features of our institution, including the determination to pursue a stronger scientific and technological thrust complementing the character and strengths of the Miami Valley. The following areas of decision making have received special scrutiny: our image in the region, our targeted clientele, primary university goals in undergraduate education, research and graduate education, program/service mix options, geographic access, and the comparative advantages we now possess. We are assessing the impact of various environmental influences on our short-term and long-term potentials and are delineating fairly carefully our internal strengths, threats, weaknesses, opportunities, risks, and patterns of beliefs and values

of faculty, students, staff, and trustees. And we have reorganized to link planning and budgeting processes for the long as well as short term.

We have found, as I'm sure you have, that there are hazards in such undertakings, especially as a university begins translating its priorities into operational objectives and budget allocations. Inevitably, some areas emerge which require more resources. The strength of others can be retained with a somewhat lower level of funding. There are also selected areas of lower priority or promise whose resources are consciously being reassigned to those with more urgent needs. Judgments are being made with greater reliance placed on external peer review, and resource and quality incentives are being implemented at the college and school level.

As we look to the future of higher education in Ohio it would be prudent for us to recall that quality is not measured by past achievements alone. It has been said that progress is not created by contented people. No matter how solid we perceive each of our institution's positions to be, the true measure of greatness for each of us can be achieved only if we continue to set purposeful goals and priorities and take the steps, difficult and even painful, that are necessary to achieve genuine excellence.

The setting of a half dozen or so institutional goals for the next decade, the establishing of priorities to achieve superior performance, and the identifying of those critical decisions linked inseparably to our aspirations form the key aspects to sound planning processes. Our past experiences tell us that no institution can do everything that is worth doing. I agree with the caution raised recently by President Frank Rhodes

of Cornell that "a great university is known for what it does *not* do as well as for what it *does* do." Each of us faces the challenge of ensuring that our graduate professional schools and selected undergraduate programs capable of state and national prominence—and we have many—are not condemned to mediocrity because the resources required for their support are not available.

As important as a credible strategic planning process is in achieving excellence, there must be a good fit between our plans and what I would like to call "campus culture."

The corporate and educational literature makes it increasingly clear that we must not view priority setting as a simple mechanistic exercise. In order to shape futures of selective excellence, we need to weigh carefully the compatibility of our aspirations with the patterns of values, beliefs, and behavior of faculty and students. The search for excellence should not be allowed to become politicized or compromised in campus deliberations.

We must guard against the myopia that has plagued so much of organizational life today. We all know that if financial problems are severe enough (as they were a few years ago), reality sets in more quickly. But the relatively good times of today should not be permitted to make us contented or too comfortable.

If we want to achieve selective excellence—i.e., if we want it to become a strong cultural goal—faculty and staff have to talk about it and act it *all the time*.

I have found Peters and Waterman's work on corporate excellence instructive on several fronts. I am even more in-

trigued by Tom Peters' current research where he argues that successful companies characteristically have the "smell" (if you'll pardon the expression) of success. The heads of successful organizations and those around them have at least one characteristic in common: they live their vision of excellence with *integrity*, *passion*, and *intensity*, they pay attention to *all* the details, and you don't have to be in the organization very long to get the message. The organization's mission has to be "non-dumb"—but the brilliance of successful companies is in the *execution* of their mission statement, not in the prose.

We must be careful in drawing parallels between corporations and universities, but the common elements deserve our serious reflection. For example, only three themes among the seven identified in *In Search of Excellence* are emerging from Peters' research as the distinctive characteristics of successful firms:

1. they are dedicated to quality and service,
2. they serve their customers very well, and
3. they constantly innovate.

It is not surprising that these themes are externally focused, ensuring adaptation to a changing environment, or that they generate organizational atmospheres of excitement and enthusiasm. Is it really any different for universities? I think not.

I fear that higher education's approach to such things as setting priorities or strategic planning becomes easily stilted, bureaucratic, overly controlled, politicized, internally-oriented, and downright boring.

If we are to achieve selective excellence, we have to unleash energy and creativity at all levels, give substantial visibil-

ity and support to the truly superb performers, then stay out of the way of our most productive people.

Peters and Waterman and others demonstrate that organizations succeeding over the long term are those that act, that have a spirit of getting on with it, that experiment, that battle conformity and inertia. They are close to their customers, they listen to and learn from the people they serve. Autonomy and entrepreneurship are fostered and rewarded; the larger organizations have an ability to act small. Successful companies recognize that the source of quality and productivity gain rests with the people in the organization. Individuals are treated with dignity and respect, for they make the difference. Successful companies pay attention to values, they know what the organization stands for, they take values seriously, they participate in and contribute to the excitement. Successful companies focus on doing what they do best and of being the best at what they do. The organizational structures of even the most complex organizations are elegantly simple and lean. Successful companies concentrate on the external, on service, on quality, on people, on informality, on innovation.

John Gardner observed that men and women "can shape their institutions to suit their purposes—provided they are clear as to what those purposes are; and provided they are not too gravely afflicted with the diseases of which institutions die—among them complacency, myopia, an unwillingness to choose, and an unwillingness on the part of individuals to lend themselves to any worthy common purpose."

In setting and funding priorities to achieve selective excellence, we have an opportunity to build into our institutions a

strong cultural context that can shape the character and substance of our universities and all higher education in Ohio for years to come. It's my hope that we will take advantage of the "window of opportunities" that now exists.

Michael R. Ferrari was Provost of Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio and is now President of Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa.

The Role of the Graduate Dean in Promoting Selective Excellence in Graduate Education and Research

Harold L. Allen

The topic before us, "How to optimize the impact of selective excellence," has been widely discussed and debated within the academic community. It remains a subject very much on the minds of academic administrators, especially graduate school deans, academic affairs vice-presidents and provosts, both throughout the state and outside of Ohio. It is refreshing, from my perspective, to see the enthusiastic response of state universities to recent and proposed Ohio Board of Regents and state-level initiatives, all of which are directed toward stimulating interest in quality and excellence in higher education. The universities have responded to these bold new initiatives by developing their own master-plans for promoting excellence. Present planning efforts suggest a departure from the concerns of the past half-decade. And there appears to be widespread agreement at all levels of the academic hierarchy that present and future initiatives, which bring together resources and talents from the state, the private sector, the Regents, and the universities themselves, will do much to advance the overall quality of Ohio's educational institutions and programs. If these coordinated

efforts are sustained and adequately supported financially, we should see the educational process in Ohio move to a new threshold or plateau. As graduate deans, we can be certain that the benefits of these different programs will be focused on the graduate and research enterprises of our respective institutions. We need now to set about the task of optimizing that impact.

For graduate deans the concept of selective excellence is not new. We have long understood the very real benefits to be gained from careful, systematic, critical, and thoughtful evaluation of past accomplishments, and the process by which priorities are arrived at for the future. For most of us the identification and promotion of excellence represents a long-standing charge to the graduate school or graduate college. This commitment has guided past decisions and recommendations on such matters as the annual allocation of assistantship resources, fellowships, and other forms of student aid; the provision of internal research support for the faculty; the granting of membership on the graduate faculty; and, most importantly, the priority setting of annual budget requests. The impact of these decisions has resulted in gradual but significant improvements in the quality and stature of our respective programs.

Graduate deans may now have a unique opportunity to influence the future development of graduate education on their own campuses, largely because of the high visibility of quality and excellence. A window, so to speak, exists, through which we can play a significant role if we capitalize on the opportunity. This window brings increased opportunities to participate in decision-making at the institutional level, increased opportunities to draw support from the graduate faculties and graduate councils as priorities are formulated,

discussed, refined, and implemented. These many efforts should promote a closer working rapport among those constituencies most directly concerned with graduate education. In addition, we will have unparalleled opportunities to look closely at overall program integrity and to gauge the ability of existing programs to meet long-term projected needs. Above all, we will have an opportunity to reassess, bring into sharper focus and perspective, and articulate the mission of graduate education and research throughout the state. I hope that the process will lead us to a clearer definition of resource needs and to other decisions that will move us forward qualitatively.

Planning for the future development of a university's graduate education and research components is often hampered by the lack of a substantial or comprehensive database from which to make judgments and recommendations. Most graduate schools have current and past data on enrollment statistics and trends, recruitment effectiveness, and degree productivity. The question we must raise is whether the lack of sophistication of the database prevents serious planning at the graduate level, and, if so, what steps can be taken to remedy the problem? I would submit that careful judgments about strengths and weaknesses of individual programs, which would allow us to make comparative analysis and weigh alternatives, can only result from vigorous program review and the use of qualified, outside consultants. Unfortunately, most graduate schools play only peripheral roles in program review, and few have the opportunity to take part in decision making that follows the closure process. The graduate deans need to be persuasive on these matters and they need to seek involvement at the institutional level in serious planning exercises.

Stimulating quality improvements in graduate education and research requires tact and sustained advocacy on the part of the graduate dean, who has few tools other than those of consultation and negotiation. The graduate dean needs to be a strong role model and must identify with the graduate faculty. He or she must be willing to engage in careful evaluation of year-to-year priorities in the budget process. It is critically important that tracking mechanisms be instituted, whereby progress of individual programs can be monitored and evaluated systematically over time. This will necessarily include monitoring external evidence for the changing reputation of individual programs; monitoring the size, momentum, and apparent stability of individual programs; monitoring the recruitment effectiveness of individual programs; and monitoring degree productivity and other evidence of success. It is especially important that a sense of the potential for future development and qualitative growth be obtained for each program over some useful time frame. The graduate dean must vigorously advance budget priorities each year which will aid the competitiveness of programs and their ability to identify and recruit the very strongest students. The graduate dean must also look at the need to allocate assistantships and other forms of support to those programs which distinguish themselves—in particular, to those in which a strong faculty is committed to promoting quality and making strategic choices. We must ask over and over again whether the faculty are making tough-minded decisions that will enhance the quality and reputation of the program.

Most of us have learned that college and departmental autonomy can precipitate difficulties when attempting to establish graduate school priorities. The graduate deans need to coordinate their planning activities with those of the divi-

sional deans and establish open lines of communication. In a recent assessment of the distribution of assistantship resources at The University of Toledo, we found that less than fifteen percent of the FTE was committed to research or research-related assignments. We tried to determine where research assistantships would provide the greatest stimulus to faculty research productivity and enhance programmatic reputation. Following discussions with departmental chairpersons, divisional deans, and selected administrators, the graduate school placed twenty-five research positions in selected doctoral programs. The departments themselves have been encouraged to actively pursue qualitative improvements in faculty research and scholarship, which is certain to benefit the graduate program. Recipient departments have also been told that they will be evaluated by the graduate school outside of the program review process over the next several years to determine the extent to which they have been successful in these pursuits. This type of coordinated effort is essential if we are to stimulate excellence.

Departments committed to achieving distinction must be encouraged and assisted. As graduate deans, we must ask what we can do to make scholarship and research flourish. The answer can be found, at least in part, in incentive programs. Divisional deans and departmental chairpersons can easily identify their very best scholars, researchers, teachers, and graduate mentors. The graduate school must identify meaningful incentives which will have an impact: for example, more released time for research and scholarship; research assistantships and technical support; modern equipment, instrumentation or specialized facilities; enhanced library holdings and specialized collections; computer hardware and software; and greater opportunity for collaboration

with peers and the very finest students available. As graduate deans, we must secure institutional commitment so that matching fund proposals can be sent to external agencies and foundations. We must also consider new ways to distribute recovered indirect costs, so that we encourage faculty research. In the final analysis, we must be willing to break with tradition and historical precedent to identify new ways to stimulate excellence.

To be effective in longer-range planning at the institutional level, graduate deans must be involved in decisions affecting promotion, tenure, and the hiring of faculty members to fill specialized niches in research or graduate programs. We all know that it takes time, resources, and effort to build strong research programs. The loss of a faculty member whose talent or expertise is fundamental to the success of the program can prove disastrous. We must see that inertia and loss of momentum do not occur.

It is also important, more so now than just five years ago, that we look carefully at our faculties and facilities to see whether they can be brought together, even across disciplinary and college lines, to investigate important research questions and problems. Departmental and college boundaries often make it difficult to establish centers and institutes, let alone achieve long-term stability. Again, we must find incentives that will eliminate such barriers. Finally, we must make available the very best research facilities and support we can find. Often our faculty, though prominent, are prevented from conducting state-of-the-art research and problem solving for lack of modern equipment and facilities.

In closing, I would like to make two brief observations. First, it is a primary responsibility of the graduate dean to

stimulate and encourage faculty research and scholarship, for they are synonymous with graduate education. One problem, as I see it, is that we tend to focus a great deal of energy and support on basic and to some extent theoretical research, and rightly so, but we ignore applied or problem solving investigation. From my perspective, this represents a somewhat myopic view of our ability, either individually or collectively, to contribute in meaningful ways to finding solutions to critical problems facing us all. The graduate dean must help to communicate to the faculty the research mission of a modern graduate university. We must pursue more vigorously institutes, centers, interdisciplinary faculty groups, university-industry arrangements, and other approaches which will enable universities to extend the frontiers of knowledge.

My second observation is that strong differences exist among the state universities of Ohio. We attract students from different clienteles. Faculty research interests and facilities vary from one university to another. Our missions are different. These separate identities should enable us to benefit each institution and the state. By recognizing each university's strengths, particularly in its research and in its graduate school, we can move our very best programs forward.

Given the highly refined persuasive skills that we deans possess, I believe we can bring about quality improvements in each of our institutions. Given also the more favorable political and economic climate for higher education, we should take it upon ourselves to act as catalytic agents in moving toward excellence.

Harold L. Allen is Dean of the Graduate School, The University of Toledo, Toledo, Ohio.

How to Make the Best Use of Good Programs and Faculty

Leo F. Solt

It will come as no surprise to you when I state that deans of graduate schools are in most cases, by the very nature of their offices, in strong positions to make sound judgments about comparative quality within the university. Not only do they directly monitor the recruitment and progress of graduate students, as well as indirectly advise others on the selection, tenure, and promotion processes of faculty members, but they also become well informed about university affairs through conducting intensive program reviews, attending unit budget conferences, and serving on the staff of the chief academic officer. Indeed, because they do not have direct budgetary responsibility for the units under their jurisdiction, they have the time, as well as the proper distance, to reflect upon the comparative quality of the academic enterprise—in short, to encourage *selective excellence.*

For those of us who entered academic life more than three decades ago, the contrast between the opportunities for academic growth *then* in nearly all areas and the restraints on academic growth *now* is startling. I can well remember that in my first year at Indiana University—it was 1955—three young assistant professors in the English Department, also in

their first year in Bloomington, were able to launch with administrative encouragement and financial support a new interdisciplinary journal in their field. *Victorian Studies,* supported now by a strong interdisciplinary academic program, will celebrate its thirtieth anniversary next year. Those were years in which embryonic graduate programs in semiotic studies, ethnomusicology, Uralic and Altaic studies, folklore, and comparative literature received initial support, amounting to only a few hundred dollars annually, from an imaginative graduate dean, John W. Ashton. These small programs, together with others such as the history and philosophy of science, have become what I like to call the crown jewels in our humanistic diadem. Those were also years in which an opera-loving dean of the School of Music, Wilfrid Bain, recruited many distinguished operatic and instrumental performers to Bloomington. Just this past Monday one of these performer/teachers, violinist Josef Gingold, was honored on his seventy-fifth birthday by an orchestra of his present students and eight soloists, all former students who are now nationally and internationally known performers. This exemplifies the profound impact enterprising administrators could once accomplish.

The purpose of this little excursion into the past is not, I assure you, to sing paeans to Indiana University. Every university has its own pantheon. Similarly, every university, including Indiana, has its share of failures. But the opportunities that once existed for many of us are no longer present. When the History Department was annually receiving five or six new faculty positions, and the English Department nine or ten, the potential for imaginative shaping of new directions was immense. We see that now. But in that heady atmosphere of expansion, not all deans and departmental

chairs took the time, or indeed even realized the possibility, to reflect upon the kind of units they hoped to see down the road. Many assumed that the road would never end or double back. Unfortunately, many sought to increase the number and size of subfields under their immediate jurisdiction with little regard for what other universities, either nationally, regionally, or statewide, or, indeed, other departments in their own university, were doing. Duplication, or wasting the taxpayer's money, were concepts that had little or no meaning whatsoever.

And yet a few imaginative deans and departmental chairs had the vision to press forward in certain select areas, trying to build permanent clusters of excellence that would last into the future. A small instance of this future concern occurred in the planning of our program in West European Studies. One faculty member insisted upon a hard-money commitment from the University to pick up three half-time faculty positions once the soft-money funds from a Ford Foundation grant for faculty positions were used up. Today, that program, unlike so many of our other multidisciplinary programs, is free from the need to solicit classroom teaching from faculty members in other units—a generosity which departmental chairs and deans are increasingly reluctant to give in the face of budget restrictions.

If those were the fat years of growth and development, how, then, are we to maintain and achieve further excellence in the long, lean period of financial stringency in which we now find ourselves? I believe the most realistic answer lies in the topic under discusion at this conference: selective excellence, unpopular as it may be to undertake and difficult as it may be to achieve. I further believe that it is worth trying,

and I shall suggest some ways in which we might be able to bring about a measure of it.

In the first place, it almost goes without saying that we must operate from positions of strength, not weakness. We must continue to support and strengthen those schools, departments, and programs which, for whatever historical reasons, we already find strong within out own universities and in relation to other universities in the state, region, nation, or, possibly, the world. We must put our limited financial and human resources into those units where they will make the greatest difference in overall quality. Inevitably, that means that the strong (in academic quality) will get stronger; the mediocre (in academic quality) may be improved in order to support the strong; and the weak (in academic quality) may even be eliminated. That is not a pleasant prospect to most academics, whether administrators or faculty members, who frequently have been nurtured in an environment where egalitarian ideals have prevailed.

In the final analysis a university must in some very positive sense be true to its historic mission, while allowing for modifications and change. It is a useful exercise for university members from the president on down to the graduate dean, the departmental chairs, and the faculty to ask themselves what their mission has been and what it should be. In addition, they must ask themselves what has contributed to making their units excellent and what has not. Let me point out here that small or unusual is not a synonym for weak. We must protect the odd program that is unique or near unique. Larger universities should collectively accept the responsibility for maintaining inquiry into seemingly esoteric fields. Each of us should be supporting some rare specialties; it is our collective responsibility to do so. But none of us should

be attempting to support them all. Replication of the esoteric only weakens us.

Having said first that we should operate from strength, I want to turn to my second point. Selective excellence can be achieved through several concomitants of the proposition to strengthen strong programs. Unlike the expansion in the fifties and sixties, when we tried to round out or fill in the gaps in traditional disciplines, in the eighties and nineties we need to strengthen further the better parts of already strong programs. That does not mean that we are necessarily going to abandon the weaker parts of such programs, especially since the interrelatedness of all parts of a discipline and the needs of undergraduates are very important for most universities. But the truth of the matter is that even strong departments cannot be strong in everything. And someone—an administrator, chair, policy committee, or department—needs to rank clearly a unit's priorities and then act on those priorities over a period of time—with a minimum of renegotiation and of opportunities for log-rolling.

A further way to strengthen good programs is to increase the quality of those mediocre programs, or subunits thereof, that are in a position to contribute effectively to the already strong program. Often such programs provide minor fields or skills or interdisciplinary support—for example, a Latin American demographer or a medieval paleographer—for other, perhaps better, programs. And finally, whether a program is strong or not, one might wish to improve it because there are not other such programs within a given geographical area. This area might be defined by a public university in a particular metropolitan region which has special needs, or in the case of other institutions, it could be the entire home state or indeed a multistate region. One of the reasons why

we did not merge our small Astronomy Department with our much larger Physics Department is because the former is the only graduate astronomy program in the state of Indiana, and as such, deserves special attention.

In Indianapolis, Indiana University operates a joint campus with Purdue University. There, Purdue already offers a panoply of master's programs in mathematics and sciences. Currently we are trying to develop Indiana University's humanities and social science master's programs in the School of Liberal Arts at Indianapolis, programs that emphasize the special needs of a metropolitan area. At first the Indianapolis history faculty pushed to develop a full-fledged set of offerings very similar to the broad range of traditional offerings in the larger and older History Department at Bloomington fifty miles south. Only after four draft proposals over a decade or so were we finally able to frame a master's degree that met faculty expertise, community resources, and student need for an M.A. in what is called public history. That more specialized degree we could both justify and support before any forum. With the very recent approval of this first College of Liberal Arts master's by the Indiana Higher Education Commission, the Indianapolis History Department is authorized to prepare historians to work in state museums, state libraries, historical societies, and historic preservation societies. Many such institutions are already located in the city and will provide both Indiana and other students with laboratories of a kind. Thus even in a period of retention, there is room for new and stronger programs, carefully defined.

In the third place, another implication of selective excellence is to weaken or eliminate mediocre or poor academic programs. As I have suggested earlier, such action is not something for which most administrators, especially if they

have come up through the faculty ranks, have either the heart or stomach. The answer is certainly not to turn over the administration of the university to retired military officers or corporation executives, who allegedly have neither the humanistic temper nor the academic expertise with which to make wise educational decisions. Nor is the answer to dismantel per se multidisciplinary programs which, though vulnerable because of their small size and limited resources, may be functioning as critical support units for traditionally strong disciplines, or may be, in and of themselves, pointing the way toward new configurations of knowledge of a high quality.

If within current financial constrictions we wish to achieve selective excellence rather than nonselective parity at a relatively good but not superb level, we can no longer afford to try to place each and every one of our schools and departments in the top ten, twenty, or thirty research units either within our own regions, or the country at large. We should decide that some of our academic units must focus primarily on an *undergraduate* teaching curriculum rather than a *graduate* research curriculum. In addition to offering support for other graduate programs, such departments, or the weaker subunits thereof, should be able to hire new faculty members, as teaching needs arise. But there would be neither the press to hire research specialists nor to invest in research materials and facilities in the field. Such areas might have more enrollment-driven budgets, while excellence in designated research-oriented units should be supported regardless of enrollments.

For these departments, or, again, the weaker subunits thereof, which would shift primarily to undergraduate teaching, librarians should not purchase additional large collec-

tions of research materials. Moreover, current research collection strength should guide not only future library holdings but also the possibility of future faculty vacancies and departmental subunit strength. I must hasten to add, however, that the technological advances in the acquisition of and access to library research materials—new collections of printed source materials, microfilming, xeroxing, computerized library source accessibility, and faculty mobility through grants and fellowships—no longer make local collecting as critical as it once was.

Librarians, I think, are as bad as departmental chairs (or deans, for that matter) in desiring to cover the waterfront. I remember with some disappointment my efforts in the mid-sixties to get all of the Big Ten or CIC History chairs and their campus librarians together for a conference in Chicago to see if there was any way for the CIC schools to divide their expanding purchases of primary source materials and perhaps some highly specialized history journals, especially from foreign areas, so that we weren't competitively driving up the cost of source materials or duplicating our purchases of little-used journals. Once the conference assembled, the suggestion fell flat on its face since not one history department nor one library was willing to forego the opportunity to become preeminent in any area in which it wished to become involved. With the rising costs of library materials since that time, coupled with the general reluctance of professors, especially in the sciences, to forego immediate access and use interlibrary loans, there has been an alarming increase in the percentage of book budgets allocated to journals, as we all know.

The chief problem with shifting a unit's primary focus from graduate research to undergraduate teaching is that in

some units provision must be made for staffing the small undergraduate class sections which a good teaching unit cherishes. Except for honors sections or sections for undergraduate majors, university departments with large undergraduate enrollments are geared to using graduate students to teach the first- and sometimes second-year introductory courses. To cut back or eliminate the graduate programs in some departments would mean that the regular faculty would have to assume most of the teaching assignments in the introductory courses—a task which, as I have learned from reviewing about fifty units over the last six years, neither the faculty wish to do, because of their usual preferences for upper-level undergraduate and graduate teaching, nor are administrators equipped to do, because the large student ratios would entail the hiring of many costly new faculty. Recently the National Commission of Excellence in Education recommended that seasoned professors teach the more sweeping introductory courses, but we will have to do much convincing before they forego the topics courses for the introductory ones.

Although graduate student teaching under supervision provides a wonderful internship for the future academic, this heavy reliance upon graduate teaching assistants in introductory courses has made it virtually impossible in many areas to cut back or dispense with graduate programs. And if those graduate programs are mediocre, then it may well mean mediocrity in the undergraduate courses. Or if those graduate programs are in areas where there is little present or foreseeable demand despite mid-nineties faculty retirements—as in many of the humanities—then we are only adding to our own problems. Placement, for example, will be extremely difficult unless we revise our curricula to accommodate alterna-

tive careers. The flexible system which we devised to serve our dual purposes of good undergraduate teaching and graduate research has now become our inflexible master. The inexorable momentum of the system has reached a questionable pedagogical extreme with the occasional use of advanced graduate students to teach beginning graduate students and even the use of advanced undergraduates to assist in courses for beginning undergraduates. Nevertheless, we must consider the impact that selective excellence operating on research programs will have on the quality of undergraduate education.

Even if a department does have a heavy undergraduate teaching load, it may become necessary to call its graduate program into question because it does not seem to be doing the job it ought to be doing. That judgment can only be arrived at through an extensive procedure of program review—in our case by two curriculum committee reviews at both the graduate and undergraduate levels and by two panels of internal reviewers and external reviewers. Should these panels offer a recommendation to suspend or disband a graduate program, our Graduate Council begins a lengthy discussion where the unit under consideration has its day or days in court. At Indiana after nearly fifty program reviews, no Graduate School program has been disbanded and only one, forensic studies, has been suspended. While the graduate program in forensic studies remains suspended, a committee made up of faculty members in Forensic Studies and other concerned units in the University is trying to piece together a viable interdisciplinary graduate program in criminal justice.

Disbanding or abolishing entire departments or programs, as we are all aware, is extremely difficult to carry off without

bitter confrontations and residual animosity, to say nothing of the very practical problems of what to do with tenured faculty—buy them out, move them to other units, or hope, unrealistically, that all but the best will leave. Until recently, departments of geography, perhaps because they have at times been viewed as overlapping with other disciplines, and schools of education, because of the overabundance of primary, intermediate, and high school teachers, have been the special targets of attack, as we know from the experience of Michigan, our collective neighbor to the north. Yet most geography departments and schools of education are getting their second wind—the latter with the nationwide revival of concern with the public schools. A few institutions may choose to eliminate programs directly. But rarely do they succeed because of the protective apparatus of the university structure. If the Graduate Council at Indiana should decide to disband a graduate program, or if some other administrative officer at Indiana should decide to disband an entire unit, then there is an elaborate procedure for the Faculty Council (or Faculty Senate) to become involved in the process.

The direct frontal assault on a well-established program is not usually a politically viable approach to dismantling it. Thus a much more common practice has been the draining of the program's resources through gradual budget reductions or zero increases in funding, including faculty salary increases, faculty FTEs, and the budgets for teaching assistants and equipment. If any of these things are beginning to happen, then an academic unit will surely know it does not stand high on some administrator's priority list. And it should heed what may well be a warning signal that the department is not targeted for excellence. If its student enrollments are stand-

ing still or declining, then it should not be lulled asleep by explanations that honestly reflect cuts based on enrollment-driven budgets. Many units in reasonably good academic shape are facing this kind of contingency. If a unit's enrollment is consistently low, the good administrator has a series of considerations to address before he or she begins to cut. Are there too many similar programs in the region? the nation? Does this unit serve as a minor for another unit? Is it this university's esoteric specialty? Low enrollments or low undergraduate demand should lead immediately to questions, not to immediate action. But if the program is truly weak, administrative officials should advise the program's faculty not only so that they will not be misled by deceitful arguments but also so that they can, if possible, change what may be a touch-and-go situation rather than die by slow starvation.

More acceptable methods of dealing with weak units include outright mergers and the breakup of academic units into component parts that can become freestanding or can be reassigned elsewhere. In the case of mergers, it is very difficult to realize any special advantages, either in costs or in scholarly productivity, because the same people usually go right ahead teaching the same old courses and conducting the same old research. Despite the loss of unit identity—often very important to the spirit and morale of faculty members—there may be some gain in administrative flexibility because the newly responsible chair is usually dealing with increased numbers.

The breakup of academic units into component parts for later reassignment may only be the prelude for something more significant. A breakup can, of course, pave the way for a meaningful academic merger in which, for example, all of

the economists, whether in the Arts and Sciences or Business or wherever, find themselves formally organized together. It can also pave the way for a divide-and-conquer strategy in which weaker subunits will be subsumed, and perhaps eventually disappear, as they are absorbed by stronger departmental units. Or, like old buildings, such units might either eventually collapse because the supporting structures around them have all been removed or, unencumbered by other structures, they might find the breathing room (call it parking space) which at long last allows them to come into their own. If mergers or consolidations are to result in strengthened programs, they must be the result of a previous period of faculty interaction in teaching and research based upon the academic complementarity of the merged or consolidated units. Anything less than that will seem contrived and artificial.

Should universities fail to address the problems of selective excellence in one of the several ways I have been outlining, or by some more ingenuous approach, then we default to other bodies: a state Board of Regents, as in your state, or a Commission of Higher Education, as in mine. The universities in Indiana often strongly resent what they perceive to be the intrusion of the commission into the operation of some of their affairs, and some of that tension is inevitable. Indeed, it may even exist in Ohio with your state Board of Regents, although I strongly believe that conferences such as this make it possible to work together for common goals rather than at sword points.

It does seem to me, however, that our commission, and perhaps your board, is certainly right when it insists that there be some coordination of academic programs, especially those planned for the future, directly among all of the state

universities and indirectly with all of the private universities and colleges. So far, our commission has not attempted to evaluate existing academic programs except to see whether the degree programs have any students currently enrolled in them. Their insistence on review of those figures, not to mention their insistence on review of the programs themselves, makes us confront situations we might otherwise ignore. Should the commission, however, attempt to go further and tell the universities which programs are weak and which are strong, which should be cut or eliminated and which should not, then we shall be in for some very difficult times indeed. It is up to the universities to develop rational approaches to programs, and that will mean administrators should be making some hard choices.

By calling for this enlightened university policy, I hasten to state that the universities should not listen only to educational needs as outlined by the politicians. The pressures used by politicians in recent years to redress the disastrous results of the recession should be only one of many factors shaping the enterprise of higher education. We must respond, of course, as best we can to the urgent needs of the state, especially where we are equipped with expertise and resources to do so. It is only a fair exchange for the generous financial contributions that the state makes to our lives. But neither the state nor the federal government, the latter with a rich largesse of research funds, particularly in the natural sciences, should ask us basically to transform our primary mission, which is to educate the citizens of our state through our undergraduate programs and to educate the future leaders of American society through our graduate programs. What we need above all other things is the basic knowledge and tools to think analytically about all aspects of the world

in which we find ourselves. The life of the mind and the expansion of the human spirit ought certainly to be the highest goals of any university and ought to be defended as such.

The experience of the state of Indiana, like most other states, I suspect, is mixed when it comes to the question of selective excellence. The location of a School of Architecture at Ball State University, which lacks the engineering infrastructure of Purdue University or the artistic infrastructure of Indiana University, hardly qualifies as a winner in the selective excellence sweepstakes. The operation of a Home Economics Department in Bloomington, when a much stronger one exists in the land-grant university at West Lafayette, or the start of a new School of Management at Purdue, when a much stronger School of Business has been operational for years at Indiana, seem equally inefficient and wasteful. Fortunately, there appears to be some disposition to curtail both of these weaker units. The one really hopeful achievement has been that the fashioning of a single medical school, located in the capital and largest city of the state, was enlarged with subunits in each of the larger cities that could carry a portion of the educational burden. In this respect Indiana's geographical configuration is decidedly different than Ohio's, which has several very large metropolitan areas.

A sine qua non in a period of retrenchment when we seek selective excellence is that the faculty must have absolute confidence in the integrity and the judgment of those administrators who are deciding what programs should be strengthened and what programs should be eliminated or allowed to languish. Not only must those administrators divest themselves, as far as humanly possible, of all intellectual prejudice for or against particular programs and personalities, but they must also subscribe to a system of due process and a wide

concern for that cherished faculty abstraction that goes under the name of academic freedom. Not only must those administrators have a considerable knowledge of where the university has been strong, where it is now strong (based upon detailed information), and a rational yet imaginative vision of where the university should be heading in the immediate and distant future, they must also have the intellectual acumen and emotional commitment that will permit critical decisions to be made in accordance with the highest ideals of a university without personal ambition or self-aggrandizement.

That is a very tall order for any group of men and women at any time. It was not the challenge that faced our predecessors thirty years or so ago. By comparison they had a relatively easy task, albeit a most significant one. Today, however, fully aware of opportunities both missed and realized, we must proceed with great care and considerable trepidation, knowing that one or two false steps, as well as one or two true ones, will affect our programs for generations to come.

In summary, I would say that we should do the following things if we wish to stride toward selective excellence.

1. We should strengthen academic programs that are already strong.

2. We should strengthen the strong subunits (but not the weaker subunits) of those that are already strong.

3. We should strengthen those mediocre programs, or subunits thereof, that are in a position to make an effective contribution to the already strong programs.

4. We should consider converting some of our mediocre and weaker programs from a graduate research curriculum to an undergraduate teaching curriculum.

5. We should consider outright mergers of weak programs with stronger programs or the breakup of weak programs into component parts that can be either freestanding or merged later with other programs.

6. We should make certain that the administrators to whom these critical decisions are entrusted are men and women of considerable intellectual acumen, sensitivity, and sound judgment.

7. Finally, we must always remain open to new programs. Selective excellence does not necessarily have to operate only on existing programs.

Leo F. Solt is Dean of the Graduate School, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

The Chancellor's View of Selective Excellence

William B. Coulter

I was delighted to be asked to return to the Regents Advisory Committee on Graduate Study (RACGS) Conference. The first conference, exactly a year ago, gave me a much fuller understanding of the concept of academic quality. Quality is difficult to describe in a systematic way, and yet, as President Paul Olscamp helped us last year to understand, there is a language of quality that peers speak in a given field. As complex and elusive as a definition of quality is, nevertheless we know it exists, we discuss it with our peers, and we regularly make judgments about it. I would like to offer a few ideas about a certain kind of quality—not average or acceptable quality, but excellence, the highest quality.

At the end of last year's conference, we went away with a very strong feeling, a conviction that it is possible to develop excellence in our political aspirations and in our academic performance. By identifying our strengths and building on them, we reinforce our own commitment to excellence, and we encourage a commitment on the part of legislators, boards of education, policy makers, and citizens throughout Ohio to excellence of leadership and support. Last year, Wimberly Royster described several components of excel-

lence, including commitment, planning, and funding. Dean Royster emphasized the fact that commitment must exist at every level: at the state level and throughout the educational system. As we redouble our efforts to achieve excellence in Ohio, we must also forge those same key elements.

One way we begin that job is here, with RACGS. RACGS is the most mature forum for higher education in Ohio. This group has a well-developed understanding of both institutional objectives and state objectives. It has gained another crucial strength, that independence and openness of thought on an array of issues in which a lesser forum might divide into self-protective camps.

I am convinced beyond substantial doubt that we, right now, can accomplish much for the state of Ohio. I seek from you a new leadership and partnership as we work together to create excellence in teaching, learning, and research. The Ohio Board of Regents believes profoundly in collaboration, and that is how I hope to proceed. By combining the experience and insight of RACGS with the board's commitment to excellence, we can move Ohio to the forefront of higher education in this country.

We are fortunate to be setting out in this direction at this particular time. I cannot remember when the scene has been more promising. We have a competent educational system, put in place over the last twenty years. It has assured Ohioans of a wider array of programs, and it has established citizen access to those programs.

Substantial qualitative growth in Ohio is now possible, and our community wants to move forward. I sense that our uni-

versity presidents really want leadership which will draw us together in strong support of ambitious goals for Ohio. Furthermore, we have a governor who understands the central role of higher education in a successful society. We have a healthy general revenue fund, a welcome change from the mid-70s. We also have a political imperative of lasting character—the need for Ohio's economic revitalization. When one looks at public planning, the single, most powerful issue is the economic health of the state. It overshadows all other concerns.

The possibility of qualitative growth and the necessity of economic revitalization present us with this rich opportunity, a chance to do something very different, to think beyond merely adequate programs. As Dean Royster observed last year, not every program or institution or student can be excellent. We will always have, and indeed need to have, programs and institutions that are fully adequate to prepare our students to perform well. We must maintain and continually improve our programs and institutions in these ways. But now we can also look to particular strategies of strength, to programs that stand out above the norm, to centers of instruction and research where we can indeed achieve excellence by deliberate state initiatives.

As we move ahead, we will do well to remember some of the painful but valuable lessons that the recession taught us. For one thing, we learned that Ohio must compete successfully in a world market, not just a national market. The damage done to our industrial strength was extensive, and we have had to address it in the context of international economics. We can't control that setting. We can only succeed or fail within it.

Second, we now have something more solid than general notions to guide us. We have the reality of rapid change, technological and otherwise, and the impact it causes. Third, we understand that economic growth in a knowledge age builds on more than the traditional agents of production, and that the quality of life in Ohio must also be very good if we are to prosper. Fourth, we know that to produce competitive goods and succeed in the world market, we must have the technology to make that happen. People who have the technological expertise to promote growth will be attracted to Ohio so long as we can offer the resources that they need: a strong economy, a fine quality of life, and a good educational system that includes a solid network of superior colleges and universities.

These conditions don't come about by themselves. They require constant attention and careful nurturing. They also require planning. The state of Ohio has been working on a strategic plan this past year, and it is exciting. The process is sound, for the state has made an earnest effort to focus on a major theme of interest. We have been able to interact with cabinet officers, legislators, experts, and private citizens not only about specific economic revitalization issues, but also about more subtle questions, like values.

From this process has emerged a clear vision and sense of urgency regarding higher education, an appreciation shared by a broad range of people in public and private life. Ohio's policy makers have made a conceptual commitment to this thing we call excellence. The strategic planning process has brought into sharp focus the need for the knowledge infrastructure that higher education represents. Higher education will produce the workers and leaders and new knowledge we need to create a healthy economy. What we must do now is

to make the link between a conceptual commitment to excellence and a legislative determination to fund excellence in our colleges and universities.

We need a strong partnership between the academic and the business communities. It seems to me that the ingredients for that partnership include four primary elements. The first is program strengths. Our universities need to perform a careful evaluation of the programs they offer. Within each university, faculty and administrators must take this strategic opportunity to identify programs that are strong. Each university must then build upon those programs that are strong and have the potential for contributing to Ohio's economic revitalization.

The second is agreement on the need for higher education's close involvement. Our focus must be on Ohio's needs so that we develop a clear popular understanding of the role higher education plays in effecting Ohio's economic recovery.

The third is commitment of resources. We must assign a higher priority to wise choices in such commitments, by both the focusing of existing university resources and the infusion of new state investments.

The fourth is a strategy for building greater strength. Having identified the existing strengths of university programs, we must nurture those strengths, using both state and university resources.

These are the components, described in broad terms, that Ohio needs to bring together in order to engage higher education as a partner in economic revitalization. I have in mind specific ways to proceed, some imperatives—four of them, in

fact—for moving us toward greater strength and, ultimately, areas of excellence.

1. We have to do partnership-building, seeking harmony between the traditional objectives of higher education and the valid political needs of the state. We must seek harmony without distorting either partner's agenda.

2. We must try to respond as broadly as we can to those things universities can do and do well. We must draw upon university resources, keeping our focus on Ohio's revitalization.

3. We must stimulate enthusiasm, creativity and a wide range of opportunities for the partnership. This is where our real power lies: in making clear to the state the benefits that will flow from a significant investment in strong academic programs that directly address the state's needs.

4. We have to assure the state that this is a reasonable bargain with clear prospects of success and with reasonable efficiency in the use of the new funds being invested. It is a partnership, and support works both ways, for the state and for higher education.

How should selective investment programs function? I think as challenges to the universities. We can't start out with a judgment as to what the result will be. I know of no central wisdom as to which strengths or scientific inquiries hold the greatest promise for a successful economy and a satisfying society. First we must stimulate a university's interest; next we must offer it a challenge. Then the university must respond, whether in a statewide competition or in a program which may call for internal institutional priority setting and wise in-

vestment of new funds. Finally, we must evaluate the outcomes. In fact, at each stage we must evaluate the response so that we keep the partnership in focus and continue working together.

We have put forward a particular proposal for how such challenges might be framed and selective investments begin. Guidelines are now necessary in order to make this plan work, and they must be established soon, while the political climate is receptive to this new approach. In developing the guidelines, establishing the programs, and implementing them, we must also devise a way of assuring the state that it is getting a good bargain for its investment. This process is extremely important in maintaining a strong partnership and keeping a harmonious atmosphere within the state.

As we proceed with this conference, I hope we can be looking for ways to make the most of the opportunity before us, and to discover how we can indeed assure excellence in higher education. RACGS has a tradition of leadership, and the maturity of this group is an invaluable resource. I thank you for the chance to talk about these ideas, and I welcome your insights.

William B. Coulter is Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents, Columbus, Ohio.

Editor's note:

Chancellor Coulter distributed a paper on selective excellence outlining five interrelated challenge grant programs

that would encourage higher education to establish and pursue priorities of strategic importance. The programs fall under two headings: Research Strength, which includes the Eminent Scholars Program and the Research and Technology Challenge Program, and Academic Strength, which includes Program Excellence, Academic Challenge Program, and Productivity Improvement Challenge Program.

Another item distributed to participants of the RACGS conference was a statement on central policy, which discussed how achieving strength in Ohio requires partnership and mutual assistance. The statement establishes the selective excellence initiative as the first priority and main strategy. The paper will be presented to the Ohio Board of Regents as an expression of what we are trying to do in the state over the next several years.

Salt Fork II Conference Participants

Harold L. Allen
Dean of the Graduate School
Director, Office of Research
The University of Toledo
Toledo, OH 43606

Ronald E. Barr
Associate Provost
Graduate and Research Programs
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

Eula Bingham
University Dean for Graduate Studies & Research
The University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, OH 45221

William B. Coulter
Chancellor
Ohio Board of Regents
3600 State Office Tower
30 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Jean D. Dickersheid
The Graduate School
The Ohio State University
230 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210

Michael R. Ferrari
Provost
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435

Julia A. Froble
Secretary to the Dean
Graduate College
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

John B. Gabel
Acting Dean
The Graduate School
The Ohio State University
230 North Oval Mall
Columbus, OH 43210

Alan N. Gent
Dean, Graduate Studies & Research
The University of Akron
Akron, OH 44325

Elaine H. Hairston
Vice Chancellor
Ohio Board of Regents
3600 State Office Tower
30 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Garrett T. Heberlein
Dean of the Graduate College and Vice Provost for Research
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

Sally M. Hotchkiss
Associate Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies
Youngstown State University
Youngstown, OH 44555

Robert F. Howarth, Jr.
Member, Ohio Board of Regents
Senior Vice President
The Huntington National Bank
17 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Richard D. Koshel
Associate Dean, Arts & Sciences
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

Georgia E. Lesh-Laurie
Dean of Graduate Studies and Research
Cleveland State University
Cleveland, OH 44115

Thomas H. Moss
Dean, School of Graduate Studies and Research
Case Western Reserve University
University Circle
Cleveland, OH 44106

Charles J. Ping
President
Ohio University
Athens, OH 45701

Robert E. Powell
Dean of the Graduate College
Kent State University
Kent, OH 44242

Leonard J. Simutis
Dean, The Graduate School and Research
Miami University
Oxford, OH 45056

Leo F. Solt
Dean of the Graduate School
Indiana University
Bloomington, IN 47405

Elmer A. Spreitzer
Associate Dean of the Graduate College
Bowling Green State University
Bowling Green, OH 43403

Donald C. Thomas
Dean and Vice Provost for Research
Wright State University
Dayton, OH 45435

Edward Verhosek
Associate Dean of the Graduate College
Case Western Reserve University
Cleveland, OH 44106